

A Lifetime, perhaps a bit longer

Excerpt from unpublished
manuscript *Roma è Blu*

I meet people now with a profound awareness of our inevitable separation. An encounter, even one that gets stretched out for many years, promises no endurance, only a collision. Wreckage of a crash, the pieces get picked up and inspected, catalogued perhaps, but all is eventually transformed by fire into ash. *Un attimo*, I learn, is a unit of time even smaller than *un momento*. Suddenly I feel an unexpected quickening of the heart, my thighs quiver, my lips curl, and I feel afraid looking into the face of someone new. I know what happens in love crashes but I fight myself in the practice. Deeply defeated, I know that separation and loss will be at the end of our story too. We won't live forever, we're both going back to the earth, we both think a lot about very old things. But then that's the fault with thinking about love or life as transactional, linear. Life doesn't move from one fixed point to another; all the points are moving, all the possible paths are being made and unmade and scribbled over like a rambling sketch you make while talking on the telephone.

You're tiny, he said, *you fit in my arms just so*. Wings folded like a cricket. A lifetime, perhaps a bit longer.

Termites are hard to kill and live a long time. Workers can easily live up to ten years, and some queens have been known to live up to 50 years. They are mothers to multitudes and reveal the futility of counting. "Although you will apparently be an immobile shapeless mass buried in