



THEMATIC TEXT
MELLONE ART PRIZE 2020
1st EDITION

Many things arose from the climate of war and the post-war period. All those events still affect us today: the voice of that era, although now distant, resounds even louder than our individual reflections still uncertain about that period. Coming out of an experience of global war and civil war, which had spared no one, established an immediate communication between those who lived those events and the listeners of each successive epoch. A face to face, full of stories to tell, because each one had his own story, each one in his own way lived dramatic adventurous irregular lives, at the limit of the livable...

One of these stories is certainly the one about Captain Renato Villoresi. He was born in Rome, on 13rd of February 1917. He lost both parents very early: his father Lorenzo, a valiant and highly decorated officer, died when Renato was just eleven years old and his mother Emma Tedeschi when he was twenty-two. Renato had two brothers, Massimo, an army officer, the older and Lionello, a naval officer, the younger. When Italy entered the war, Renato was serving in the 13rd "Grenadiers of Sardinia" artillery and was completing his studies to graduate in engineering. He fought on the Balkan front. Fascism fell on 25th of July 1943 and Badoglio signed the armistice with the Anglo-Americans on 8th of September. The Germans, commanded by General Kesserling, attacked Rome. Renato participating in the fighting at Magliana was injured in the leg. Renato actively engaged in the Resistance and entered the clandestine military training "FOSSI" directing a profitable information and counterintelligence activity. On 18th of March, 1944 he was arrested and taken to the Via Tasso prison where he suffered unspeakable torture by the Germans who could not obtain any information from him on the organization to which he belonged. After the events in Via Rasella on 23rd of March 1944 the Germans ordered retaliation. Renato Villoresi and other



prisoners were taken to the Fosse Ardeatine in Via Tasso and Renato was shot on 24th of March 1944, at the age of only 27.

The artist, through his personal poetics, is invited to express his thoughts, declining these facts based on his sensitivity. Its task in society has always been to grasp, see and reveal what is often invisible to the common eye. Certainly, the reading of the author is always subjective and partial, but the reality he suggests always reveals the complexity and vast expanse of the territories of the human soul. The artist provokes us and invites us to go beyond, always, beyond appearances, beyond what seems obvious.

In this way the promoters of the Dario Mellone Prize intend to start a thematic reasoning starting from the universal drama of the war, moving from real events that still resonate in our contemporary world.

ALLE FRONDE DEI SALICI

*E come potevamo noi cantare
con il piede straniero sopra il cuore,
fra i morti abbandonati nelle piazze
sull'erba dura di ghiaccio, al lamento
d'agnello dei fanciulli, all'urlo nero
della madre che andava incontro al figlio
crocifisso sul palo del telegrafo?
Alle fronde dei salici, per voto,
anche le nostre cetre erano appese,
oscillavano lievi al triste vento.*

(Salvatore Quasimodo, "Giorno dopo giorno", 1947)