

## WORK POETRY / POÉSIE DE TRAVAIL

### Carlo's First Born

Carlo never takes Franco to the poolhall.

Before buying his first car,  
Carlo visits a relative early Sunday morning,  
leaves Franco there,  
and meets with fellow workers for an afternoon of cards.

When he finally buys a Ford,  
he tells Franco to keep strangers from it,  
and explains he'll pick up bread for Sunday dinner.

Locked in a station wagon five hours,  
Franco hums songs to himself,  
watches other fathers take sons into the bakeshop  
and come out, pastries in their hands.

At twelve years old, Franco  
writes letters in Italian for Carlo  
who has remained illiterate.

Franco turns sixteen. Carlo gives him work on a roadcrew,  
boasting to men who mark time cards with an X  
of his son's writing skill.

Sundays, Carlo still goes to the poolhall  
while Franco studies books and mows the lawn.

In the time he has to himself, Franco  
builds the best ships and warplanes hobby shops sell,  
learns History and Latin inside out, and puts  
his heart into a new guitar.

Though he has helped Carlo pay the rent,  
Franco does not ask Carlo for money  
when university begins.

Carlo hopes his son will be a teacher, and  
marry Filippo's daughter after getting his degree.  
Franco wants to be a planning engineer.  
Has no interest in a girl he knows as loud.

Arguing with Carlo day and night, Franco  
finds himself behind half way through first semester.  
Dropping out, he needs money and accepts  
Carlo's offer to work roads again.

Franco is among men working with their hands,  
but Carlo has stopped boasting.

Franco only writes for his mother Concetta now.

On the asphalt crew, Carlo starts a fight  
with a rival foreman,  
who criticizes Carlo giving Franco work.

Franco interferes and loses his job.

Carlo wants to start his own company.  
Franco only wants to play guitar,  
and refuses Carlo's demand to return to university.

In winter, Carlo has a kidney stone removed.  
Franco leaves the house by noon  
and works late hours in a grocery store.

Carlo begins the spring with another company.  
Though the pay is good, Franco  
will not work for him.

Carlo visits the poolhall less, but when he does  
he invites Franco along.

Franco takes his guitar,  
and singing a song about a Calabrian brigand,  
puts fire in the workmen's hearts.

Carlo cracks a triangle of balls, and pauses  
before taking his next shot.

The workmen want another song.

Carlo leaves the poolhall  
and sits behind the wheel of his Ford.

## First Job

Sal never calls it toil or labour.  
Each day he swings his pick  
hard into earth, moves  
heavy chunks with a teasing laugh.

When we break for lunch,  
he's the one slapping his thigh,  
whistling at girls  
and telling the best jokes.

With a long nose and yellow teeth, Sal  
has little choice in looks,  
but as lunch ends  
he's first to set his muscles into motion.

"*Ciucciu beddu di stu cori . . .*," his donkey song,  
cuts the thick air of the job-site, swings  
his body up and down,  
making every move seem simple.

Infected by his casual approach, I try  
a song of my own,  
and put my back out taking slabs of concrete off a truck.

That night, Sal visits me at home. Smiling,  
he shakes his head from side to side, and says,  
"You gotta use the muscles right."

Back at work two weeks later, Sal stands by.  
Making sure I use my legs when lifting,  
he grins, "*Ciucciu beddu*."

"*Ciucciu beddu di stu cori . . .*" translates as "Sweet donkey of my heart . . ." from the Calabrian folk song of the same name.

## Whitewall

Rosario's wheels spit back dust.  
Hand hugs the shift,  
angling gears on job-site roads.

As he races speed's unknown,  
tight corners  
slip his pickup towards the homestretch,  
no one seeing the drywall crew  
crossing slabs  
for half-built homes.

## Unlike Napoleon

Five-foot-two Pasquale has it rough  
getting men to follow  
simple orders.

He claps his hands, screaming, "*Avanti!*  
Asphalt is coming!"

We don't budge, but joke  
about his reddening doll-face nose.

"Who is the boss here?  
Me or you?" he challenges.

"We are!" we answer  
as he throws his clean white hardhat  
to the ground.

## Mid-Season Strike

Machines are still today. Strike  
Placards lulling men whose muscles  
itch in idle air.

Eight weeks ago, Spring brought good news:  
a project meant to last us through October.

"The union makes the rules," says Pasquale,  
rolling down his shirtsleeves.

"And what are we to do?" I ask.  
"Stand silent like machines?"

Joseph Maviglia

# Complaints about the Postal Service?



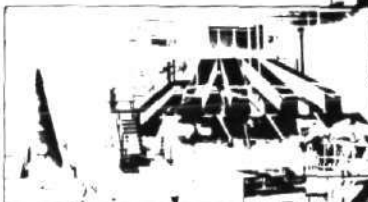
**We understand your complaints  
— and we have a few of our own.**

We are the Canadian workers who move the mail — more than 7 billion pieces a year.

We see longer line-ups and mail delays while Canada Post cuts back on staff.

We see more addresses being served by community boxes while hundreds of thousands of Canadians are denied door-to-door delivery.

We experience the problems in small communities when the local post office is closed down.



We also see the federal government patronizing their friends with postal contracts. This trend towards contracting out and privatization affects all Canadians by increased costs, deterioration of services and the elimination of jobs.

We say the postal service must remain as a public service with equal access for all.



**IT IS TIME TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND POSTAL SERVICES!**

**HELP US TO PUT THE SERVICE BACK  
INTO THE POSTAL SERVICE.**

**MAIL THESE COUPONS POSTAGE-FREE  
TO OUR POLITICAL LEADERS.**

This coupon may be sent postage-free by first-class mail to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada. Please do not send this coupon to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada by air mail. Please do not send this coupon to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada by registered mail. Please do not send this coupon to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada by certified mail. Please do not send this coupon to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada by insured mail. Please do not send this coupon to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada by collect-on-delivery mail. Please do not send this coupon to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada by return receipt mail. Please do not send this coupon to the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada by any other method.

Send to: Member of Parliament  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0S6

Dear Member of Parliament:

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to: The Honourable Ed Broadbent  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0S6

The Honourable Ed Broadbent:

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to: The Right Honourable John Turner  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0S6

The Right Honourable John Turner:

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to: The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0S6

Mr. Prime Minister:

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the postal service. I am a Canadian citizen and I have the right to expect the postal service to be efficient and reliable.

NAME

ADDRESS