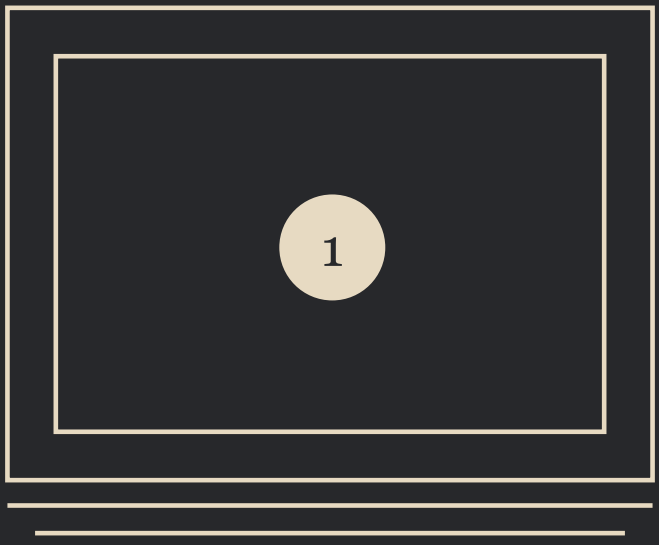
WHEN YOU BECOME POOR



FERDINANDO FREGA

PART I

Bread and Dignity

“Poverty doesn't ask,” he observes. “The eyes train to scrutinize other people's bags: fresh bread, a leftover. Every gesture becomes a map of possibility. Every kind word is more nourishing than a coin. And that warm croissant, offered by a stranger, smells more like home than sugar.

The Threshold

The door was ajar, as it is on certain occasions. It was not just an entrance—it was a boundary: between what is seen and what is left unsaid. The man standing before that threshold trembled, not out of fear of entering... but because of what he would leave outside. The silence, the indifference, the risk of becoming transparent. And so, in a whisper that seemed like a scream, he said: 'Not today.' And he turned back. But that threshold remained there. A reminder that the worst thing is not dying. It is ceasing to exist in the eyes of others.

Customs

Poverty becomes habit. Not only in the eyes of others, but also in your own. You wake up and discover that it is not just your wallet that is empty: your ideas, your dreams, your hopes. But in the void, a spark is born. A burning anger, a desire for redemption that never dies. Every step is a struggle against the voice that says, "It's too late now." But every step is also a victory. Invisible, but real.

Family and the Future

Family is not what you see in photos. It is what holds you up when you falter. And the future? You face it gropingly, like a blind man in a minefield. But every gesture of love, every sacrifice, every stolen smile... that is the future. Not the one you imagine, but the one you build, one day at a time.

Letter to the Reader

These pages are not notes. They are wounds. If they are of any use to you, even just for a thought, they have already won. I cannot solve your problems. But I can tell you this: even without anything, you can leave a legacy. Even without a voice, you can be heard.

The Opaque Mirror

The mirror no longer reflects the face. It reflects the struggle. The eyes tell the truth, even when everything else is clouded. I do not look at myself out of vanity. I look at myself to remind myself that, even if I do not recognize myself, I am still here. The mirror is opaque. But the eyes do not lie. And if I can look at myself, even without recognizing myself, I am still alive.

The Squeezed Toothpaste

The toothpaste is gone. You cut it, you crush it, you open it. And you discover that there is still something there. This is also part of survival: knowing that, if you look closely, something remains. Always. Even when it seems gone, there is still something. Like us. Just cut it, open it, search. And you discover that you can still smile.

The ATM Puzzle

The ATM does not make mistakes. Correct code, balance: zero. It is a puzzle without a solution. You can read, but there is no answer. Poverty speaks a language that machines do not understand. And you are left there, with the application in your hand and no reward. The ATM does not just deny you money. It denies you the illusion of still being part of the system. And you, standing there, understand that true poverty is no longer having access even to hope.

Grocery Shopping with a Calculator

Grocery shopping is an equation. Milk: Yes. Ham: no. Bread: only yesterdays. Every product is a calculation, every sacrifice a choice. One day I bought juice for my son. Only that. That day I felt rich.

The Unmade Bed

The bed remains unmade. Not out of laziness, but because no one will see it. It is freedom, sometimes. Defeat, at others. But if I sleep in it, it is mine. And if it is mine, I am alive. The bed remains unmade. But every crease tells the story of nightlife. And every night lived is a small victory against nothingness.

The Unsent Message

“I'm fine, don't worry.” I have written it a hundred times. Never send it. Because it was not true. Lying to someone you love is the first betrayal. The message stays there. And I with it. Sometimes, the message you do not send is the one that saves you. Because it does not betray the truth. And the truth, even if it hurts, is the only company that remains. The message stays there. Unsent. Like certain truths that are left unsaid but scream inside. And you listen to them. In silence.

The School of Serious Things

I did not learn English as a child. But I learned to recognize a sincere face. I do not know how to calculate bank interest, but I know when someone looks at you with contempt. And that, in my world, is worth more than a hundred degrees.

Chipped Glass

The glass is chipped. But I use it every day. It is a gift from someone who is no longer with us. Every sip is a liquid memory. Even if it cuts my lips, it remains mine. Because broken things, if loved, are not thrown away.

The Lump in the Throat

Sometimes your heart tightens, but you remain still. You swallow the emotion; you transform it into thought. That lump in your throat becomes a voice. And then a word. And then a page.

The Suspended Coffee (Mental)

I cannot offer a coffee at the bar, but I can leave one hanging in my mind. A kind thought. A well-spoken phrase. A gesture that goes unseen but remains. It is my way of contributing, even without a wallet. Because kindness does not cost anything. But it matters. I cannot offer a coffee at the bar. But I can leave one hanging in my mind. A kind thought, an invisible gesture. It is my way of contributing, even without a wallet. Because kindness does not cost anything. But it matters. And remains.

The Account Book

I keep a notebook where I record everything: income, expenses, hopes, disappointments. Every page is a reckoning that never balances. But among the debts, every now and then I write an unfamiliar word. One that is worth more than all the numbers: resist. Between the lines of my notebook there are more than just numbers. There are days, faces, sacrifices. And every now and then, an unfamiliar word. One that is worth more than all the debts: resist.

PART II

Active Despair

Authoring a book in a brief time is unthinkable for those who live in tranquility. It is superhuman, they say. But for those who ride the wave of desperation, without being overwhelmed by it, it is the only way to survive: to spit it all out before silence takes over. The effect of my manifestations is like a rifle shot: you must always be wary of the recoil.

Indexes and Values

The rich are just poor people with more money and wealth, nothing more. But to measure and weigh people, there are other indices and values; measuring tapes and scales are not needed.

The Declaration of Abandonment

I'm just a man on the street, the last of the scribes and the first to help you, and I have the pleasure of sharing my experience, different from the others, but better for one reason only: because I tell it in writing.

If you think the book might have suggested some solutions to you, you will make me happy, but you will be even happier.

If not, do not worry, because our lives will always go on, until Judgment Day, and we will get there together: you with your problems, and I with

my books.

Chasing Yourself

You can escape poverty, debt, judgment. But you cannot escape yourself. Everywhere you go, you find yourself. With the same fears, the same questions. Chasing yourself is a paradox: you run to find yourself, but every time you get close, you slip away. And then you stop. You look at yourself. You recognize yourself. You are not what you wanted to become, but you are still alive. And on some days, that is enough.

Reasoning Like a son

As children, we learn to hide our tears so as not to hurt those who love us. As adults, we forget to listen to the child we were. But when you are poor, you become a child twice over: when you ask for help and when you give it. Thinking like a child means having respect. Even for the pain you do not understand. And if one day your father falters, you do not judge him. You support him. Even without words.

The IQ of the Poor

When you are poor, they measure everything: your intelligence, your dignity, even the way you breathe. But no one has ever developed a test to measure your survival IQ. Because it takes more neurons to say "I'm fine" even when you are sinking. Because only the poor know how to solve the impossible equation: surviving with zero resources and two children to feed. Call it instinct. I call it intelligence that does not make a resume.

Nobody's Curriculum

They asked for my resume, and I gave them my face. This is my experience: twelve unpaid jobs, five sleepless nights, two missing teeth. I can do everything except pretend. And no one hires someone who does not pretend. My resume has no dates. It has scars.

But if you want someone who does not run away from the first problem, that is me.

The Art of Not Giving Up

The poor have no holidays. No breaks. No Saturdays. They have bills that arrive even at Christmas, and sleepless nights even after a good deed. And yet, they do not give up. Because those who have hit rock bottom have learned to float with punctured lungs. The art of not giving up cannot be taught. It is engraved in the bones.

The Low Gaze

I do not lower my eyes out of shame, but out of memory. Because down there are my hands, which have done everything. Pushed carts, picked up glass, caressed children with broken fingers. I look up only when the person in front of me has clean but empty hands. Then, yes, I am no longer afraid.

The Rich Man's Clock

The poor have less time. Waiting to collect their pension is free. Standing in line at the humanitarian organization for the poor is necessary. Being late for work is your fault, even if the bus does not come. The rich pay for their time; the poor endure it. But every minute I have endured without collapsing... I consider it truly precious, as if it were " pure gold."

The Sound of Hunger

Hunger is not just a stimulus. It is a sound. It throbs in your ears, wrenches your insides, makes you feel guilty even when you are not to blame. It is a deep, dull sound, that only those who truly know it can recognize. And it is there, even when your plate is full, because you know you might not have it tomorrow.

The Silent Telephone

A poor person receives more advertising than actual phone calls. Every ring is hope, every silence is confirmation. Others have busy schedules; we have busy expectations. But sometimes, even without calling anyone, someone thinks of you. And then that silence becomes companionship.

The Empty Table

There are parties you are not invited to, but there are also parties you choose not to go to. Because you do not want to feel like a poor relation, the one to be pitied. You toast alone, with tap water. And smile. Because at least there, you are authentic. At least there you are yourself, without the show.

Good Shoes

My shoes are not beautiful. They are witnesses. They have seen rain, asphalt, income tax lines, closed doors. Beautiful shoes make the catwalk. Mine make the road, and the holes in the soles—well, air that lets the foot breathe.

Old Comrades

The poor today are no different from those of yesterday. They are just lonelier, more digitalized, less seen. But if you find a true one, a companion in your toil and in life, there is no stronger bond. We are bound by what we do not have. And by what, despite everything, we have left: dignity.

The White Envelope

A white envelope was left on the table. Inside, a small amount of cash. No signature, no note. An act of charity? Of shame? No. It is a code. It is the way the poor help each other: in silence, without a show, without a photo.

The Nameless Days

There are days when you do not even know what day it is. Because Sunday has no flavor, Monday has no work, and Saturday has no fun. The days become a sequence of survival. But sometimes, even then, a light shines through. A word. A gesture. A piece of warm bread. And then that day has a name. It is called: still alive.

Where Dreams Sleep

In my house, there is a drawer that once held dreams. Now it is empty. Or. Inside, I left a faded photo, a missing key, and a note that says, "Don't give up." Sometimes, opening that empty drawer is all it takes to start over.

The Broken Lighter

I have had it in my pocket for years. It does not light anything. But I keep it like a relic. Because once upon a time, it lit the cigarettes my father smoked. And one night, it also lit the words of this book. A broken lighter that ignited memory, a flame without fire.

The Line of Dignity

There is an invisible line between pride and hunger. You dance on it like a tired tightrope walker. To ask or not to ask. To speak or to remain silent. But if you still have the strength to choose, you are still free. And if you are free, you are alive.

The Glass Door

In front of certain public offices, there is a transparent door. You see everything, but no one opens it for you. People are talking, laughing, and clocking in. Not you. You remain outside, with your request in hand and humility between your teeth. The glass makes no noise, but it divides like a mountain.

The subscription expired

The bus arrives. You look guilty, but deep down you know it is not your fault your pass has expired. You sit down in fear, checking every uniform that gets on. Then you get off two stops early, to be safe. Poverty makes you get off early. Always.

The Counts briefly

I no longer calculate in euros. I calculate them in liters of milk, peaceful nights, and missed trips. One euro is one less phone call. Two is one more trip on foot. I graduated in emotional economics. I know how much a rejected coffee cost. And how much a given hug is worth. But even an enthusiastic kiss, and you never know how much you will get back.

Silent Armor

The sweatshirt I am wearing has sagging wrists. It has no hood. It is unbranded. It is unfashionable. But it warms me. It represents me. It is my armor when I go out. It does not make a scene. It makes history. Someone suggested I buy stickers to make them look branded, but I gave up because I am truly poor.

The Promises of the Rich

The rich promise projects, funding, long-term plans. We promise only three things: to do things and be there. And not to give up. And when we deliver on those three, we have already made more than a thousand speeches from the palace.

PART III

Words on Credit

I borrowed words I never got back. “I'll help you.” “I'll take care of it.” “Count on me.” They were empty promises, words without interest. Now I speak little. But every word has legal force.

The Coin That Remains

Sometimes it is enough for someone to hand you a coin without making you feel inferior. Someone to look you in the eye while listening. It is not charity. It is humanity. And those who have lost everything remember that gesture for a lifetime.

Cold Silence

A silent refrigerator is a warning bell. It does not buzz; it does not click. It is empty. It is inert. It is silent. But I open it anyway. I look it in the eye. And inside I find something no one sees: my desire for change.

The Ink of the Wound

I write, but I am out of ink. I write, but the printer is broken. I write, but who will read? And yet, I write. Because even if no one prints these words, I am living them. Every unprinted page is a wound that remains in my head.

The Light Under the Door

From the landing, I see light under other people's doors. They were laughing. They were eating. My door was dark, but open. And when a child knocked by mistake, I offered him a slice of bread and a story. That day, light entered my room too, and he had trouble leaving. The poor attract; the rich reflect.

Elegance in Waiting

I have a dress tie. Never worn. It sits there, folded, waiting for an interview that never comes. I take it out every now and then. I touch it. I apologize. But even she knows that, if you fight, there is still a neck to lift.

The Courage of the Washing Machine

It takes courage to take your clothes to the laundromat. Because time is public, laundry is visible, waiting is judgement. But I go. I go because even a poor person has the right to feel clean. And every washed shirt is a declaration of identity. I am among so many women, talking, and that is priceless.

The Unsolicited Gift

They gave me a dress for charity. It was too big. My pride was swimming inside, but on the outside, I was smiling. Because a gift is a gift. Even when you do not choose it. Even when it reminds you that you cannot afford it on your own. I put it on and tightened the belt but could not find the holes to fasten it: I noticed my weight loss.

Monday 's Mail

Every Monday something arrives: a bill, a fine, a deadline. Never a letter, never a surprise. Only heavy paper. And yet, I keep opening it. It is my weekly challenge: to face what scares me. But I know that what arrives is sad news, while the good news is waiting to be delivered.

Light Between the Manholes

From the ground floor, you see less sky. More cars, more people walking, more closed windows. But when the sun sets for you too, you appreciate it more. Because you know that sometimes beauty sneaks in even through manhole covers. And when the steam rises and you warm up, you also smell the cooking aroma, the one that brings back memories, but for me, represents the future.

The Thump of the Keys

The keys fall to the floor. A sharp sound reminds me that I still have a door to open. A small house. But mine. I have no carpets or frames. But I have a roof, and a silence that acts like a blanket.

The Window Without a Curtain

I did not put curtains on the window. Not for aesthetic reasons. But because they were not needed. Those who should be looking in do not look. And those who look in see nothing. I might as well leave the window bare. Like the truth.

The Books of the Market

I bought them for euros. Pages already turned, covers marked. But inside I find worlds that not even luxury has ever given me. For the poor, reading is like traveling without a ticket. And it is the only escape no one can deny you.

The Coin in the Ashtray

I found a coin in an old ashtray. It made me smile. You cannot buy anything with it. But on some days, it is a ticket back to dignity. I left it there. To remind myself that wealth also means knowing how to give up.

The Common Courtyard

There is a courtyard that has lives intersection. Children playing with nothing, women carrying bags full of anxiety. We share air, dust, sometimes even coffee. It is our living room. And there, every now and then, we feel like a community again.

The Cut Label

The sweater was expensive, but cut, tag. Donation. Old stock. I wore it like it was new. Because it was new to me. And for the first time in months, I looked at myself in the mirror without lowering my eyes.

The Offered Passage

They offered me a ride. Only three kilometers, but they spared me a humiliation. It was not charity. It was kindness. And the way they let me in, without judgment, was as good as a new car.

It was thanks to the butcher's wife who I helped with anatomy lessons in the past years, but the bodies were always the same: ours.

Throne of the Margin

The chair is there, chipped, unstable, with a sagging armrest. But it does not fall. Like me. I sit on it every day, and not for comfort—for consistency. Writing on it is like signing a declaration: I am still here. It is my throne, even if no one envies it. And no one can take it away from me.

The Very Short Pencil

It is three fingers long, without an eraser. But it still writes. Like me. Every time I use it, it reminds me that the end is not really the end... if you leave a mark. And it does not want the sharpener to go in; I only just realized it is a girl.

The Missing Button

The jacket will not close. The button's missing. But I am going anyway. Because dignity is not in appearance, but in how you walk. And I walk straight, even with one button missing.

The wait at the post office

Forty people, a number that never comes. Sweat, exhaustion, silence. But in that wait, there is something sacred: the patience of those who have learned not to give up. And every time I leave there, I feel alive. Even without money.

The Frame Without a Photo

It sits on the shelf, empty. I have not printed the image yet. But I already know what I will put in it: a moment when I am happy, despite everything. An empty frame is a dream waiting.

My Grandfather's Brooch

It is rusty, out of fashion. But I carry it in my pocket. Because he, with that pin, endured hunger without ever bowing his head. And when I touch it, it reminds me that blood never gives up.

The Broken Umbrella

It has a broken rib; it bends in the wind. But I open it anyway. Because poverty does not make us fragile. It makes us adaptable. And if it repairs, even a little, I will keep it.

The Night Pass

I walk alone, late. Not for pleasure, but out of necessity. The night smells different when you are poor. It smells of silence, of a wet road, of heavy thoughts. But even there, I walk. And if you stop listening, you hear unlikely voices—no, no, it is not your stomach, but those to whom do not know they are being listened.

The Chipped Spoon

Nobody wants it. It is bent. But it still holds coffee. I use it every morning. It is my ritual: a bitter sip to remind me of that, even though I still serve.

The Heat of Herbal Tea

I do not drink tea for pleasure. I drink it because it warms me. It is the only thermal luxury I allow myself when the boiler is silent. Every sip is a self-imposed caress. A small comfort in the long night.

The Missing Document

“We need the original certificate.” “We need your great- grandfather's signature.” “We need something you don't have.” Every door is a castle, and you are outside with your armor broken. And yet, you try again. Tomorrow.

The Late Laughter

I often get the jokes a second later. Not because it is slow, but because I am thinking about something else. Like whether I have enough bread for tonight. Or whether the gas will hold. But when I laugh, it is genuine. And double the value.

The Window on the Wrong Side

My window looks out onto the wall. No view, no sunset. But I know how to listen. And from there I hear the voices of those who live. And so, that wall becomes a sound diary.

The Odd Sock

I have a blue one, a gray one. It does not matter. They should not slip; they should keep you warm. Every morning, I put them on and bless them. Because they do their job. Even if they are not a pair. Like some people.

The Dim Light Bulb

It is dim. It flickers. But I will not change it. It is not laziness. It is respect. If it lasts, I will let it live. We are too much alike, she and I.

The Queue at the Canteen

It is not hunger. It is habit. It has forced humility. Standing in line with tray in hand, avoiding glances. But sometimes you meet eyes like yours. And you exchange a nod. Like soldiers in the same trench.

The Unsent Invitation

I have written an invitation. A party, a coffee, something. But then I thought, "I have nothing to offer." And I did not send it. I wonder if they did the same on the other end.

The Recycled Dream

I once dreamed of opening a bar. Then one day I made a coffee for a sad friend. Without a bar, without a counter. But with all my heart. That was the dream. Only smaller. More real.

Words That Don't Weigh

I speak softly, so as not to disturb. Because I was taught that those who have nothing must also weigh little. But sometimes, inside, I scream. And those silent words fill pages like this one.

The Thin Line

There is a fine line between dignity and desperation. I walk it every day with empty pockets and a straight back. One mistake, an unexpected expense, a dreadful day... and you fall. But if there is a line, there's pace. And I keep walking.

Daylight Saving Time

When the time changes, the rich forget. I do not. An extra hour can mean free electricity. An hour less means an early dinner. Poverty also controls your time. But it does not steal your life.

The Stationery Basket

Once I found a notebook there, it was still half empty. I took it. I wrote my thoughts in it. Words have no expiration date. Even when they were born in someone else's wastebasket.

The Accustomed Ear

You do not have to tell me, "I'm fine." I can hear it in your voice if you are lying. Because I have spent years listening to silence. And I have learned that truth lies in breaths, not sentences.

The Party Dress

I have had it in my closet for years. I wear it whenever I need to look "presentable." It is the only dress I know better than my own skin. And every time I put it on... it is a battle.

The Supermarket Air

I go in even when I do not have any money. Just to feel the air conditioning. To fool myself, for a moment, into thinking I am part of the "normal." Then I leave empty-handed. But with full breath.

The Cut Soap

When it is halfway through, I cut it in two. To make it last. To give the illusion of abundance. The scent is still the same. Only more fragile.

The Neighbor's Dog

He is not mine, but he smells like me as if I were. He follows me. He is sitting at my feet. He is the only one I do not have to explain anything to. To him, I am not poor. I am human.

The Chipped Plate

Every time I wash it, I think about throwing it away. Then I dry it, and I eat it again. The crack is there. But it holds up. Like me. I look at it, I observe it, and I say how lucky it is. So many memories, so many dishes that have passed over it, and it is only left with a chip.

The Counted Breath

There are times when you hold your breath. Not out of fear. But so as not to disturb. So as not to make noise while asking for a favor. Then you exhale. And you are still there.

The Wind in the Corridor

I live in a whistling building. The wind rushes through the loosely closed doors, through the rickety gates. It is annoying, yes. But also, true. It is the sound of a city that does not pretend.

The Jar Without a Label

I found a jar with no name in the pantry. I did not know what was in it. But I opened it with confidence. Inside, lentils. Even in poverty, there are surprises.

The Aluminum Pot

It is old, with a scratched bottom. But everything I cook in it tastes like home. You do not need new pots to cook with dignity. All it takes is the right heat. And a little silence.

The Journal of the Past

I do not read the news to stay up to date. I read it to remind myself that the world is moving without me. But sometimes, on a torn page, I find a sentence that saves me. I found an important piece of news but realize I am already a victim, 24/48 hours behind schedule.

The Staggered Key

Sometimes it turns. Sometimes it does not. I force it, but gently. Like life. Because if you push too hard, it breaks. Like everything you borrow.

The Perfume Under the Skin

I do not own designer perfumes. But I know when I feel clean. And on those days, my skin smells of quiet dignity. The scents change based on the foods you eat, but as we all know, my sense of smell can only detect two or three cents in a short space of time; the rest is always captured in my nose.

The Curtain That Does Not Darken

The light still comes in. Even when you do not want it. Even when it hurts. But sometimes you need that light. To see what you no longer want to ignore.

The Doorkeeper's Greeting

He is always the one to say hello first. A good morning from someone who has worked a lifetime carries more weight than a thousand empty courtesy. He is the only one who sees everyone. And who never looks down on anyone.

The Work Shirt

It has the logo of a company I no longer work for. But it is comfortable. And it reminds me that I resisted. Every time I wear it, that T-shirt speaks of a past that never broke me. How much I loved that job and how I miss it more than the people.

The Intentional Delay

Once I purposely arrived late. To avoid the look of someone who would ask, "How are you?" That day, I did not have the strength to lie. Silence seemed more dignified than a lie. Sometimes, using your imagination would be enough, sometimes.

The Shadow on the Floor

In the evening, when the light cuts across the living room, I see my shadow lengthening. It does not scare me. It just reminds me that, even though I do not have much, I am still here. And if someone cast it else, I would not notice because shadows do not offer the size and weight.

The End of the Day

When the sun goes down, I no longer wonder if I have done enough. I only wonder if I have held on. If I have kept my cool, my pace, my heart. The end of the day is the beginning of my victory.

The First Brick

I do not know where this book will lead. To a forgotten shelf. Into a hand that needed it. But I know that every story is brick. And I laid the first one. With difficulty. With honesty. With a full voice.

PART IV

IQ and Illusion

My IQ? 140. "Genius," they say. But when you are out of work, out of money, that number does not save you. In fact, it condemns you: you see every detail of the abyss. Intelligence does not protect you from poverty. It just makes you understand better how far you are falling.

Cognitive Portrait

My mind raced faster than life. I dismantled thoughts, finding invisible connections. It was not talent. It was self-defense. Either you make sense of your scars, or they consume you.

Behavioral Analysis

A high IQ is not a privilege. It is loneliness. Your mind races, the world slows down. You retreat, not out of pride, but for survival. And the more alone you are, the harder it becomes to return.

The Knot of Survival

Surviving is not a matter of intelligence. It is willpower. It is endurance. It is crawling through the mud without losing your dignity. There are no manuals. Only reality. And within that reality, you must find a foothold. Even a small one. Just enough to keep you alive one more day.

The Pact with Myself

I have made a pact with myself: no matter how much it hurts, I will keep going. I have no prescriptions. I have truths. And if you have the courage to listen to them, you too will find your footing.

Laid Table, Empty Flavor

The table seemed full. But it was empty. The food did not fill the silence. The abundance was only appearance. The real hunger was within. And no one saw it.

The Silent Disease

I had it all. Or so it seemed. But inside, there is a chasm. Stress took its toll: seven neuroendocrine tumors. Thirty days to live, they said. But I was not ready. And my mind, the one I had neglected, saved me.

The Work of the Mind

I began to work by myself. Philosophy, medicine, spirituality. Twenty years of study. Then came Freemasonry. Not power. But brotherhood. The rough stone to be polished. The real metal was within.

Fantasy and Wealth

I had it all: money, women, power. Then I woke up naked. Not naked, but naked. They had stripped me of everything. I was poor. But ready to find myself again.

Reborn with Three Euros

Three euros in my pocket. A house, just barely. I wrote seventy books in two years. I thought I could reconquer the world. But I was wrong. When you think you know everything, you have already lost.

The Freedom Train

I left without money or documents. I got on a train. I told stories to the ticket inspectors. Some laughed, others wanted me to get off. But I stayed. Because when faced with the impossible, you need capable people. And I was born for this.

Return Among Children

I returned to my children. They opened the door to me. I was their father, but the true bond was with their mother. I stayed a few months. I knew it would not be forever. Sometimes, love is not enough. You also need space. And I did not have any left.

The Book of the Poor

Here begins my true story. FERDINANDO FREGA was born. Not a pseudonym to hide, but to protect myself. I write for those who have the courage to read. For those who have lived, made mistakes, loved. For those who know that poverty is not just lack. It is the truth.

The Escape from Zero Euro

I had 0.21 euros in the bank. I had to escape. I wrote to six people. In a minute, I had three hundred euros. Then another 150. It was enough to leave. It was not just an escape. It was a rebirth disguised as desperation.

The Leap into the Unknown in Porto

Porto was unknown. The hostel, a new world. Two nights, little trust. The Portuguese wanted to see your face before giving you a room. I was looking for work. But time was not on my side. Only willpower was.

Starting Over at 60

I am sixty years old. A job in sight. It was not just a job. It was dignity. I asked for help with respect. Starting over meant regaining independence. And silence. The silence that writers need to stay alive.

The Journey to the Airport

My son wanted guarantees. I wanted to leave. He threatened to hospitalize me. He gave me twelve euros. A cold hug. I crossed the threshold of the airport. He stayed behind. And I, for the first time, profoundly moved forward.

Check-In at the Airport

My suitcase is too heavy. No one to give my clothes to. Then Ilaria, the station manager, arrives. She listens to me, is moved. She gave me fifty euros. It is not just helping. It is recognition. Two tired souls meet. And they understand each other.

The meeting with Ilaria

Ilaria, from Veneto, thirty years old. A brief but genuine smile. She listens to me, cries. She lost her father. She sees something missing in me. She hugs me. She gave me fifty euros. It is not charity. It is respect. It is shared strength.

The Dutchman on the Flight

Beautiful, confident, Dutch. She sits next to me. She looks at me. She wants me to follow her. But I am a poor man who resists. I promise her an eBook. She does not know my name. And it is better that way. Sometimes, danger is just an invitation to remain free.

The Metro

Eight stops. A 24-kg suitcase. A young Portuguese couple accompanies me. We walk 1.8 km. They offer me kindness. I offer them a book. We laugh. And for a moment, I am no longer alone.

First Hostel

Two bunk beds, clean sheets. Air conditioning. Not the worst. The roommates? Romanian and Belgian. We talked. We sleep next to each other. I stay awake. Poverty does not sleep. But it observes. And write.

Second Hostel

I walk. Then I will give you a taxi, seven euros. The owner kicks me out, then invites me in. It is hot. I found a humble bar. I eat, drink, and observe. The place to sleep? Downstairs. It feels like a pantry. I sleep among cats and Chinese fans. But I resist. And tomorrow we are off again.

Free Men and Good Morals

When people try to make sense of human behavior or events, they take refuge in science, medicine, or, when all else fails, even the divine. They need external support, a reassuring explanation that makes the unpredictable more bearable. But almost no one considers that a human mind, freed from shackles, can generate new conditions. That it can create realities beyond stereotypes, challenging common logic and overturning even what seemed immutable.

Because these logics, however rational, are not universal laws. They are judgments written in the thoughts of those afraid of straying from the path, those who prefer the security of mental jurisprudence to the risk of building new roads.

All this disheartens those who, like me, are born, live, and die with only one conviction: to be free. Free to think without constraints, to act

without having to seek permission from collective consensus. Free to create, even at the cost of making mistakes, because the true prison is not circumstances, but the mind that refuses to break through them.

The Trust Trap

After losing everything once, he thought he had learned his lesson. When the second chance came, he vowed to himself that it would be different. This time, he would build, he would invest wisely.

But you cannot change your mind with an oath. And he had no tools, only hopes. He trusted those who spoke difficult words, those who wore designer clothes and promised sure earnings. He wanted to appear intelligent; he did not want to admit he did not understand. He signed contracts without reading, followed advice without hesitation, passed money to unknown hands, hoping that his luck would continue.

When he realized everything was gone—money, friends, "consultants" he was left alone with anger and shame. He had not just been robbed, but betrayed by himself, by his inability to control his own destiny.

Freedom is not delegated. Freedom is taking control, even when it is scary.

The Changing Head

After watching money arrive and disappear twice, something inside broke and then rebuilt. It was not just luck or chance: it was the decision to change my mind.

It was no longer enough to desire wealth; we needed to prepare ourselves to manage it. We needed to learn to look beyond immediate need, beyond the reflexes of those who only want to put on a show. We need to understand that true freedom is knowing how to say "no," even when they ask you everything.

Wealth then became a tool, not a reward. The mind grew stronger, ready to bear fear, responsibility, the burden of change. Every choice was a

test of strength, every sacrifice a step toward freedom.

It was not an easy journey. Often, the urge to give up, to throw everything away, returned. But those who profoundly change know that the greatest wealth is not what is in their bank account, but what is within themselves.

That new mind, capable of generating conditions never seen before, is the only true key to being free.

The Bus Station

I had decided: to get out of that city. A poor person senses danger before others; they have a radar that psychiatry is still studying. The taxi is my salvation; it takes me to the bus station heading south, towards Portugal, 550 km away. A city with promises of low-cost housing, but I know it is not for me: age, summer, tourism—all variables that crush you. In front of me, there are almost 120 buses. It feels like New York, a Greyhound station, thousands of buses ready to depart. I am sitting next to a blonde foreigner, 35-40 years old, blue eyes, absorbed in her phone. I ask her if she speaks English; she smiles warily when I try to coax a smile from her with a desperate, poor joke. She gets up and leaves.

The Return of the Blonde

Ten hours of waiting for my bus. But the poor man's instinct is sharp: I change the ticket, pay ten euros more, leave early. And the blonde is there again, beside me, like a winning card drawn at the right time. I introduce myself: "I'm not an encyclopedia, I'm just the lowest of the scribes. I'll read your hand, for free." She laughs, laughs like a madwoman. I opened her heart. No numbers, just Facebook, without insistence. She asks me about my books, especially one: Heart and Women, which touches the depths of humanity. Finally, I say to her: "Take your wings in your luggage, because angels care to observe them but often forget them."

Stop at the bus station.

I was waiting for the connection. An hour to go, sitting on a bench as hard as my life. Next to me, a woman laughed at my jokes, as if the world had never tried to crush her.

“Where are you from?” I asked her. “Brazil,” she replied. “I’m going to a nearby city.” She did not get on my bus, but she looked at me as if she wanted to invite me on hers.

He approached with a mixture of boldness and desperation: "You're handsome, strong, tall, thin... I bet you are also good in bed. My instincts tell me so. Come with me, you won't regret it."

I was abroad, far from cameras and TV programs, ready for inappropriate surprises. But I refused. I had to move on. I thought to myself: men's poverty is great, but women manage it better. They react instinctively to their status. We are women's children, but in poverty we become our fathers' children.

At 7:30 PM, I arrived in the city of BEJA. The station was deserted, just two taxis. I took one to look for accommodation, but after twenty minutes of wasted time and ten euros less, I returned to the starting point. Trapped. No departure. No way out. I began walking along a road that ran along the sea. Tired, thirsty, with a suitcase as heavy as my defeats and accounts in my pocket that left no margin. I sat down on a bench. I stared into space.

From the Brothel to the Departure

Around 10 PM, a woman approaches and leans in next to me. "Hi, I'm Carla. Italian. Come with me tonight. I'm cheap." "Thank you, but whether with or without money, I'm not in the habit of buying sex. I cultivate love for everyone, one at a time or even three at a time, but always with politeness."

She burst out laughing. “Three at a time? At forty, you are Superman?” “No, I’m just a man who hasn’t lost his sense of respect.”

We stood there talking, two souls out of place. Around two in the morning, he asked me why I was not going to the hotel. "You know, I'm poor. But if I had money, I would give it to you without asking for anything. Money is a tool; we are true value."

"Damn, what a head..." he said. Then, instinctively, he picked up my suitcase. "Come, stay with me tonight."

Only later did I understand where she had taken me: the largest brothel in the city. But she did not ask me anything. She cooked me a hot meal, took a shower, and left the room for me to rest. In the morning, she brought me breakfast and, with eyes filled with strange hope, asked me to take her with me. "You're 38, I'm 80," I replied. "How long do you think we could live together? I have nothing to offer you. I'd only double my problems."

When I left, eight women from the brothel were there, lined up like a rescue team. They greeted me all at once, as if I were an old customer. No tears, just smiles. Then I headed back to the station to catch the morning bus. Towards another uncertain chapter.

The Capital

The financial statement is unforgiving. The more it dwindles, the more worry it bites your throat. Where to go? Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, Romania, Bulgaria... places different only on paper. I would have arrived in another corner of the world to die. No future, no plans, just another escape with no return.

Religious Aid Agencies and priests? No thanks. This time I would not cling to them. It would have been like signing the final sentence, an admission of failure. I was not ready to end up boiled in that pool of warm water they call charity. I wanted to stay afloat, free, in the immensity of the sea.

Then, like a flash, an ad on a website: a room for rent. €230 a month. Finally, the amount of money that fits into my empty pockets. It could be the first step to getting back on track. But Lisbon does not spare even

the poor devils. The first disappointment: an address with ten streets with the same name, but only the area is different. My taxi drops me off at the wrong place. I take another, arrive at the right destination, and the owner is not there.

I call. Once, twice, ten times. Silence. Every unanswered ring is another punch in the face, a kick in the ass from strangers. And there I am, standing there, with my suitcase, like an idiot still hoping.

There is a bar next to the house. I go in. I ask for a bottle of water, something to eat, and if there is a restroom. Only water. Only anger. I cannot even find a plant to pee on.

Finally, I booked a hostel room over the phone: €58 for two nights. Money snatched from my already depleted resources.

As soon as I confirm the payment, my phone vibrates. "Sorry, I'm having trouble with my phone. I'll wait for you downstairs." It was the owner.

The Realization

One of the first steps of being poor is taking inventory of your remaining resources and turning them into money. It is the brutal logic of survival: accept your new situation, reverse course, and assume the role you have been given. It starts with the most precious thing you own: your cell phone. Yes, you will upgrade from your current phone to the latest 50-euro Chinese brand. It does (almost) the same things, but it strips you of your status. Then comes the rational analysis: sell the few valuables you have at the local gold-buying store, or put everything you can online and sell, sell, sell. To stay alive.

Designer clothing becomes a memory, just like the "friends" who now avoid you as if you were positive about the virus: they must be kept at a distance to avoid being infected by your decline.

The car remains the last resort. But before that, you will have already traded in your €500 shoes and put on new €12 ones, made in China. Even personal care slips away: those €150 face creams you used to buy

at the perfumery, while the owner greeted you with a smile, are now just a memory. The same owner now passes you by on the street without saying hello. As if she had never seen you before.

All you have to do is take refuge in that place where you can be alone with yourself. Reflect, reflect. The only possible exercise is to find a way out of the tunnel. And keep asking yourself: Why me?

Dead Times

These are the moments when you do nothing. Going from frenetic activity to idleness is a luxury you cannot afford. You have put your only traveling companion, your brain, to rest, and all you have left is your other faithful friend: your cell phone. Music, videos, social media. Free. You find yourself spying on the lives of others, like old gossip leaning out of her balcony to watch the village. Meanwhile, the headaches arrive, the repeated physiological needs, born of stress. You wonder if you are getting sick. And it, the technology friend who has never abandoned you, whispers: "Whatever you want to do, you need to be in good physical and mental condition. And this comes from how you eat."

The answer comes out from you immediately: "I have no money. I'm poor." As if you wanted to save money on yourself. But it is the one thing you cannot afford. You must bow to the will of life, you must learn to be balanced, thoughtful.

Now you understand the value of a cent. Because a hundred cents make a euro, and a euro, even a small one, is something. A hundred or a thousand euros are not born from a soulless bank transfer: they are the sum of small gestures, of cents collected.

And that phrase that buzzes in your head relentlessly: “How stupid I was. How much money I wasted. Today they would have saved me.”

But salvation is not money. It is in habits, in change. Those are the first real actions.

A pit in your stomach reminds you that you have not put anything in for days. It is the signal. Now you must act.

The Nutrition

Your technology will advise you on what to buy. It will ask you for some data, calculate your daily calorie needs, and compare them with your remaining budget. Its estimate will be higher than your current budget, but no problem; you will just need to reduce the quantities. This is being poor in 2025. Far from centuries past: today, technology is your true support, your trusted friend. But never let it take control. That is yours alone. You filter, evaluate, and decide. Always and only you.

You will get a personalized meal plan without paying a dietitian. They will also suggest the right discount store where you can get the essentials. Because here, in this vital space called nutrition, there is no sacrifice. We are what we eat. If you want to reclaim your life, this is the only way to do it.

When you enter the supermarket, you no longer look at the merchandise. You check the prices. You put something in the basket, then take it out. You tell yourself, "I can do without this." You spend a long time browsing the shelves, but you never feel the temptation to steal. You are not a cocky thief. You are a poor man with dignity.

At the checkout, it is just you and the basket. You already know how much you will pay. If you miss something, you feel no shame in saying to the cashier, "Take this away. I remembered I already have it."

You come home with two full bags. And you are surprised: you managed to do your shopping for just a few euros. Just a few. When once you spent on a lobster what today would last you a month.

The saying is so true: “I am not afraid of the rich becoming poor. I am afraid of the poor becoming rich.”

PART V

The Apartment

The owner looks at me, scrutinizes me. Nine of us live fifty-two square meters. No one talks about politics or religion. Five languages save me. After an hour, they call me "the Calabrese." In the evening, I become "the Professor." I do not know if it is respect or fear. But it is a name. And a name, here, is already something.

The Bunk Bed

The bunk bed reminds me of the military. But now climbing up is challenging work. The sheet has a hole; the pillow has feathers stolen from a turkey. Eight people snore, dream, talk. The challenge? Tell a joke in nine languages. And make them laugh.

The Bathroom and the Mirror

The bathroom is a refuge. The mirror asks me: "When will it end?" It is not a dream. It is a test. My new degree: Applied Poverty. And the kitchen table is my teacher's desk.

The Silence of the Night

Sleep is survival. Sleep is a luxury. The fear of losing what little you have keeps you awake. But the poor do not steal. It is the rich who attract predators. I have only silence. And dignity.

Dawn and the Restart

Five in the morning. The others are asleep. I got up. I have no land to till, but I have words to write. It is time to start again. Every day is a new battle. And I am ready.

Gentle Surface

Everyone smiles. But it is superficial kindness. Strategic courtesy. No one here gives anything away. Everyone is a closed book. And I, page after page, begin to read them.

Silent Analysis

I observe. Not to judge, but to understand. The problems are not money. They are habits, colors, rhythms. And when rhythms clash, friction occurs. Poverty does not forgive those who do not reflect.

Strategic Solitude

Here, no one helps you. No one gives you space. The struggle is lonely. The absence of women prevents wars. Because yes, people die for love. But here, we survive through silence.

Women and Drift

Women are strength. But if you do not have a cent, they exclude you. It is not malice. It is instinct. No one gets on a drifting boat. They look at you. They respect you. But they distance themselves.

The Voice of the Bed

I lie down. The bed smells of dampness. But it is mine. And in the silence, a voice whispers: "There is an exception." Even here, one can still be happy.

The Spark

Happiness is not a luxury. It is a natural condition. Sometimes, it takes extraordinarily little. A gesture. A smile. A spark that comes from nothing. And breathes with everything.

The Change of Clothes

I get dressed. But it is no longer a catwalk. I walk among strangers. No one recognizes me. And me? I do not look like anyone anymore. I am alone. But true.

Exploration

I go out. Not to buy, but to search. I leaf through magazines, looking at ads. But I know: poverty does not forgive improvisation. You need a plan. You need clarity.

Descent and Geometry

I have hit rock bottom. But rock bottom is a point. And from there, a line can be drawn. I will draw the next line. No one will do it for me.

Stolen Time

Time is not mine. It is a luxury I cannot afford. Every minute is a choice. Do everything. Or nothing. But even nothing, sometimes, is resistance.

The Magic Moment

My magic moment? Giving, even when I have little. It is not altruism. It is poetic resistance. It says: "I exist. And I can still give."

The Fruit Crates

The fruit crates sparkle like jewels. Cherries, peaches, designer bananas. Once upon a time, they adorned my table. Now they are mirages. Luxury from another era. But even mirages make one dream.

Cents Like Diamonds

I count pennies as if they were diamonds. I used to spend a month on a lobster what would now last me a month. How strange life is. And how strange we are: capable of finding happiness even in the dust.

The Table Without Ritual

There is no table setting here. You eat it when your body demands it. Nine people, nine lives, a three-foot table. No "enjoy your meal." Just hunger. And silence.

Under Observation

I am the newest arrival. They scrutinize me. They do not touch them, but they strip. From the fork I hold, from the way I chew. Poverty has sharp eyes. It leaves no escape for those who act.

The Challenging Look

A black man stares at me. “You’re a fake poor man,” he says. “You have money.” I look at him. I smile. And I sing La Traviata. Applause. Poverty is not just hunger. It is also theater.

Head and Courage

I look him in the eye. I do not look away. "If I were rich, do you think I'd eat here?" He laughs. "That's just the way you are." But I stayed. Because dignity is priceless.

The Broken Bread

I broke the bread. I offer it. “From a pretending pauper to a real man.” He takes it. Chew it. His eyes never leave mine. It is respect. It is recognition. It is human.

The Silent Balance

The silence changes tone. It is no longer suspicion. It is balanced. An unspoken pact. A respect born from gesture. And that needs no words.

The Human Conquest

You can conquer any terrain with words. If you choose them at the right time. Money is not necessary. All it takes is a head. And courage. And I, even here, remain a man.

The Hidden Pack Leader

Paolo does not command. He observes. He protects. He is the leader of the pack. Silent, elegant. Life has etched the same tiredness in our eyes. But also, the same undying flame.

The Silent Bond

Paolo drove a taxi. But his role was different. He drove me around, and we went shopping. I reciprocated with measured words. Nothing else was needed. Respect was mutual. He is silent.

The Boss's Lesson

Paolo offered me his meat pie. I thanked him but declined. Not out of pride. Out of principle. Remaining whole was my strength. And he understood it. Because the pack leader does not impose. He teaches.

The Evening and the Spark

Everyone is coming home from work. I am "the Professor." But I ask, "Call me by name." Alfonso, from Mogadishu, tells me, "You're a leader." But the real spark is Paolo. A silent brother. And a guide.

Day and Brotherhood

Paolo returns tired. I will tell him about Freemasonry. He shows his Brazilian lodge membership card. We are brothers. He cries. He calls me "project." His son texts me: "Hi, Uncle." Brotherhood is born. And it does not need blood.

The Walk

I walk. My parents are dead. Now I am rich, but only on paper. I write to my wife: "I want my books to burn with me." My strength? My daughter. Disabled. The rights to my books will be her future. If the miracle comes.

Friends

Loyal friends are few. They seek you out. They read you. Even when you do not reply. Life turns. And when it turns wrong, comes the retaliation. Women? They are the beginning and the end. The cure and the cause. Long live women. But sometimes, it is better to stay away. Just for a while.

The Job Interview

A woman offers me a job. 2,000 euros a month. I am asking for five hundred. She does not understand. She invites me to lunch. She kisses me. I resist. I tell her a story. She laughs. Then she vanishes. Like everything else in this life of escape.

Saturday and Sunday

On Sunday, I cook pasta with fava beans. Everyone eats. No one brings anything. No one says thank you. I do not talk about the pain. I shed tears to myself. And I understand: an intelligent woman remains intelligent. Even in modest clothing. Like a poor man, if he has dignity.

The Silence That Waits

Everyone stops. Hands suspended in mid-air, half-eaten bread, still spooned. They wait for my reaction. I smile and begin to sing an Italian opera, La Traviata, and... everyone applauds.

The Silent Bond

Paolo drove for the world's largest taxi company, but his role was different. We quickly became a silent team. He drove me around without charging me a cent. We went shopping together, buying only the necessities. I reciprocated with measured words, distant caresses. Nothing else was needed. The others watched us, suspended between curiosity and mistrust. Paolo was the hidden master, and I had learned to respect the leader of the pack.

PART VI

Change

Every day something slips away from you: a job, a rent, a friend. They call it change. But when you are poor, it is a free fall. Procrastination is pointless. The problem will come anyway. And you must choose to react or let it crush you.

Brain Border

There is a point where your mind no longer distinguishes between hunger and nervousness, between tiredness and resignation. I call it the "brain border." It is the moment when you stop reacting. Not out of laziness, but because you have worn yourself out. And no one sees it.

After Me

Statistics are useless when you are talking about people. You can calculate everything, but you cannot measure the hearts of those who live with nothing. When I die, I will not take anything with me. But my books will remain. And one day, someone will read them. And say, "This is the Author."

The Factors

In a room, thirty people discuss what matters in life. An old man says: "Intelligence. And the ability to adapt." Silence. Because it is true. Poverty is not just a lack of money. It is an inability to react. And those who do not adapt fade away.

To escape

Poverty is a cage. And not just an economic one. It is made of debt, fear, and days that are the same. And so, you look for an escape. Read, write, meditate. Leave. Or you get lost. Not all escapes are wrong. Some save you. Others drown you. But they all speak of freedom.

Inner Strength

No one can save you. Only the strength you have inside. It is not magic. It is the result of every closed door, every sleepless night. Resilience is not resisting like a wall. It is becoming water. Flexible. Adaptable. It can overcome any obstacle.

My Best Friend

I turned off everything: phone, TV, computer. And I listened to the noise in my head. Fears, judgments, unfulfilled dreams. Silence hurt. But also, good. Now it is my ally. Only there do I understand who I am. And where do I want to go?

An Improvised Adventure

I took a train without knowing where to get off. At the third stop, a small village. A café, three tables. I sat down. People watched. Nothing extraordinary. But there, in the simplicity, there was beauty. The best life is the one that surprises you. When you let go.

The Power of Forgiveness

I lived with resentment. Just hearing its name was enough to make me feel pain. Then I understood: hating it gave it power. I wrote a letter. Finally, I wrote: “I forgive you. Not because you deserve it. But because I deserve to be free.” I burned it. And I freed myself.

PART VII

The Sea at Night

At night, the sea is another world. I walk barefoot on the shore. The waves caress my feet. The horizon is black, but not scary. The sea whispers to me: "Your problems are not so big. I am vaster." And I breathe. And I leave a fear there.

The Child Inside Me

A child invites me to play. I laugh. I ran. I fell. I got up again. For a few minutes, I was not poor. I was alive. That child inside me never disappeared. It just hid.

The Words

Words are brick. They build or destroy. Every word has weight, a root, a story. The best? Those that are not said. Those that remain. Those that save.

The Choices

Poverty takes away the luxury of choice. You eat what costs less. You wear what is given to you. You walk. You do not choose who you spend time with. But you can choose one thing: love. Even when it hurts.

Study

Studying is a privilege. When you are poor, you do not lack desire. You lack the time. Peace of mind. The money. And so, you learn differently: you observe, you listen, you make mistakes. Life becomes your university. But the price is high.

Reciprocity

My grandfather did not speak much. But every gesture was a pact. "In mutual interest," he said. He was sparing with words. Rich in dignity. And that handshake contained everything: respect, balance, truth.

Money and Wealth

Money is power. But only if you know how to use it. Wealth is not distributed. It is earned. And those who do not understand money are left out of the game. True wealth? Knowing how to say "no." And remain free.

Sport

Sport is a school of life. It teaches you to sweat, to fall, to get up again. It is discipline, respect, and collaboration. Within that chaos, true bonds are born. And you discover that, even without winning, you can be great.

The Joy of Giving

Giving is power. Not because you have so much. But because you choose to offer. A smile, a word, a hand. Giving changes you. It makes you human. And the more you give, the more you receive. It is the simplest law. And the hardest.

Poverty Touches Your Shoulder

There is no warning. One day you have everything. The next, nothing. Poverty does not come suddenly. It eats away at you slowly. It makes you stagger. Then it makes you fall. And if you are not ready, you do not get up again.

The Loneliness of Those Who Are Falling

When you fall, others disappear. Messages do not reach you. Silences grow longer. And you are left ashamed. Loneliness weighs more than hunger. Because it makes you feel invisible.

Dignity Shatters

Poverty changes you. It forces you to make choices you would never have made. Every day is a battle. You look in the mirror. And you do not recognize yourself. Dignity becomes a mask. And you no longer know who you are.

The Struggle to Survive

Every day is a race against time. Fewer resources, less energy, fewer options. Poverty convinces you there is no way out. But inside you, something fights. And it will not go away.

PART VIII

Do not Be Poor Anymore

You hit rock bottom. You have two choices: stay or climb back up. Strength does not come from money. It comes from within. To be reborn is to recognize your own humanity. And to accept that the road will be hard. But it is possible.

The Man Who Lost Himself in Failure

Failure is a minefield. Every thought is a trap. Shame devours you. The mind denies possibilities. Depression is not sadness. It is siege. And you, little by little, become a ghost.

Loneliness That Becomes Madness

Loneliness festers. The silence becomes deafening. Thoughts become distorted. Reality blurs. The mind invents worlds. And you cannot escape. Madness does not come suddenly. It is a slow dissolution.

The Anger That Consumes

Anger is poison. It grows inside you. It gnaws at you. It isolates you. You cannot use it to build. And then it destroys you. Every action is a challenge to yourself. And you lose. Always.

The Escape into Vices

You seek relief. Alcohol, drugs, compulsions. Temporary anesthetics. But they are chains. You cling. And you sink. The relief fades. Emptiness remains. And you become a prisoner. Of the body. And of the soul.

The Hopeless Void

Emptiness is not absence. It is the presence of pain. A weight on your chest. Days pass colorlessly. Without purpose. Without motivation. Life becomes a waiting game. And you no longer know that for which to wait.

Provocative Aphorisms

• Poverty teaches you nothing. It takes everything from you and then asks you to smile.

• He who says “you just have to want it” has never been hungry.

• The Silence of the Poor Is More Deafening Than a Thousand Posters.

• Dignity cannot be bought. But it is easily lost.

• Money does not bring happiness. But its absence brings despair.

• Almsgiving is the elegant way of saying “It doesn’t concern me.”

• The poor are not invisible. They are uncomfortable.

• Charity is often just a form of narcissism.

• He who has everything speaks of merit. He who has nothing speaks of survival.

• Poverty Is Not Fault. But It is Treated as Such.

• The Poor Have No Time for Hope.

• Hunger is not poetic. It is dirty, urgent, humiliating.

• The System Is Not Broken. It is Built That Way.

• The poor man is not a failure. He is a survivor.

• Shame Doesn't Come from Lack, But from the Gaze of Others.

• Work does not save. Sometimes it condemns.

• Poverty is not an issue. It is a condition.

• He who has never lost anything can understand nothing.

• The Poor Don't Ask. They Resist.

• The real revolution is looking into the eyes of those who have nothing left.

Moments of Reflection

• Sitting on the step, I watch the world go by. No one stops. But I remain.

• I realized that you do not need answers. You just must keep asking.

• Poverty has stripped me of what is superfluous. And show me what is necessary.

• Every day is a question. Every night, a suspended point.

• I do not want pity. I want someone to listen without turning around.

Moments of Anxiety

• The fridge is empty. The phone rings. My heart races.

• Every Noise Is a Threat. Every Letter, a Debt.

• I sleep little. Not to think. To make sure everything does not collapse.

• Time does not pass. It is running out.

• I am Afraid of Tomorrow. But also, of Today.

Moments of Depression

• I do not get up. Not because I cannot. But because I do not see why.

• The world is far away. I am here. And it does not look like it is for me.

• I stopped counting the days. Now they count on me.

• I do not cry anymore. It is no use.

• I look in the mirror. I do not recognize myself. And no one does.

Moments of Rebirth

• I Found a Coin. It is Worthless. But Today It is Worth Everything.

• A hand touched me. Not to give. To stay.

• I Wrote a Sentence. And I Felt Alive.

• The Sun Came in Through the Window. And I Wasn't Afraid.

• I Have Nothing Left. But I Still Have a Voice.

Forge of the Poor Summary Ten Perspectives

Poverty is not just a lack. It is a condition that speaks, that questions.

• Past: roots of silence.

• Present: everyday invisibility.

• Future: right to hope.

• Projection: vision of an alternative.

• Reflection: necessary disenchantment.

• Meditation: Emptiness as Revelation.

• Spirituality: where the superfluous disappears.

• Invitation: the action that transforms.

• Result: the trace of change.

• Expectation: the waiting that teaches. This forge is a laboratory of thought. Every story is a spark. Every word, a hammer blow. True change cannot be seen. It happens within. Only those who change within can change the world outside.

Emotional Introduction

Poverty is not just a lack. It is a condition that speaks, that cries out, that questions. It is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be understood. Poverty is the face of those who wait, of those who struggle, of those who hope. It is the silence of those who have no voice, but who, if listened to, can teach more than a thousand speeches.

This forge is a symbolic place, a laboratory of thought and emotion. Here, the cold iron of poverty is hammered under the hammer of reflection, meditation, and spirituality. Not to break it, but to transform it. Each story is a window onto a different aspect of human need. Each word is an invitation to look beyond, to feel more deeply, to live with greater awareness.

Poverty is not just for those who have nothing. It also affects those who do not see those who do not listen, those who do not understand. In this melting pot, the reader is invited to pause, reflect, and be touched. Not

to find answers, but to raise questions. Because only those who question can change.

Past – The Roots of Silence

The past of poverty is made up of forgotten stories, of lives that have left no trace. It is a time when need was hidden under rugs of shame, when those who had learned less to survive without asking. But in those shadows, there was already a spark of dignity, a strength that resisted judgment and hardship.

The roots of poverty lie in a soil of silence. The silences of those who could not speak, of those who were not heard. But those silences are also memories, they are the foundation on which to build a deeper understanding.

The past is not just what happened. It is what teaches us to look at the present with different eyes.

Present – The Invisible Daily

Poverty today is invisible. It does not walk barefoot; it does not beg on the streets. It lives in tidy homes, in clean clothes, in smiles that hide their need. It is poverty that masks itself, that hides so as not to be judged. It is the plight of those who cannot say "I can't do it," because society will not listen.

The present of poverty is one of invisibility. Lives spent in silence, people struggling every day to maintain a semblance of normality. But beneath that normality lies a muffled cry, a need demanding to be seen. Poverty today is not lacking. It is invisibility. And invisibility is the cruelest form of exclusion.

Future – The Right to Hope

The future of poverty is an open question. Will it continue to be exclusion, or will it become an opportunity? The future of the poor is not one of luxury, but of hope. Hope for a dignified life, for work that gives them value, for a society that does not leave them behind.

The future is a time that does not exist yet but can be built. It is the right of every human being to imagine a better tomorrow, to believe that change is possible.

Poverty does not demand privilege. It demands hope. And hope is the first step toward change.

Projection – Alternative Vision

Projecting means imagining what does not exist yet. It is the courage to imagine a different world, where a person's value is not measured in money, but in humanity. Where those who have less are not excluded but welcomed. Where poverty is not a problem, but a reality to be transformed.

Projection is the first step towards the alternative. It is the dream that guides action, the vision that inspires change. Only those who dare to imagine the impossible can pave the way for the possible.

Reflection – The Necessary Disenchantment

Reflecting on poverty means looking at it without judgment, without pity, without fear. It is an act of disenchantment, of honesty. It means asking ourselves what we truly lack, what we define as wealth, what we are willing to share.

Reflection is uncomfortable. It forces us to look within ourselves, to recognize that poverty is not only for those who have nothing, but also for those who cannot see, who cannot hear, who cannot understand.

Poverty challenges us. And only those who allow themselves to be challenged can change.

Meditation – The Void as Revelation

Meditating on poverty is a revolutionary act. It means entering the silence of need and allowing yourself to be questioned. There is no immediate answer, only a presence to be welcomed.

Meditation is the moment when emptiness becomes revelation. It is time to stop, breathe, and listen. It is the place where poverty ceases to be a problem and becomes a reality to be understood. Only those who breathe in the void can find authentic fullness.

Spirituality – Where the Superfluous Disappears

Poverty is the place where the superfluous disappears and only the essential remains. It is the moment when we discover the value of being, not of having. It is the threshold where the sacred, the divine, the profound manifests.

The spirituality of poverty is not theory. It is experience. It is the moment you discover that, when everything is stripped away, what remains is what truly matters.

Poverty is the place where the noise is silent and the spirit speaks.

Invitation – The Action That Transforms

Every poor person is an invitation. Not to compassion, but to involvement. It is a call to see with new eyes, to bridge distances, to build bridges.

The invitation of poverty is a call to responsibility. It is the moment when we decide not to turn away, not to ignore, but to act.

True solidarity does not come from money, but from the decision not to ignore.

Result – The Trace of Change

Every story has the power to change the reader. The result is not only concrete help, but an inner transformation. It is the seed planted in the mind, in perspective, in the heart.

True change is not visible. It happens within. It is the moment when the reader stops being a spectator and becomes an actor.

The result of poverty is the change in those who understand it.

Expectation – The Expectation That Teaches

Poverty is about waiting. Waiting for answers, opportunities, gestures. But it is also waiting for respect, recognition, and dignity.

The expectation of poverty is not passive. It is a lesson. It is the moment when we learn to hope, to believe, to resist.

Poverty teaches us to wait. But it also invites us not to keep those who suffer waiting too long.

Emotional Conclusion

The Forge of the Poor is not just a symbolic place. It is an invitation to pause, reflect, and feel. It is a space where the cold iron of poverty is hammered under the hammer of understanding, solidarity, and hope. Here, need is not judged but embraced. It is not ignored but listened to. It is not resolved but transformed.

Poverty is not just for those who have nothing. It also affects those who do not see those who do not hear, those who do not understand. It is a condition that challenges us all, that requires us to look beyond, to feel more deeply, to live with greater awareness.

In this forge, every story is a spark. Every word is a hammer blow. Every reflection is a step toward change. Not an immediate change, but an internal, profound, authentic change. Because only those who change within can change the world outside.

Poverty is not a problem to be solved. It is a reality to be understood. It is the face of those who wait, those who struggle, those who hope. It is the silence of those who have no voice, but who, if listened to, can teach more than a thousand speeches.

This forge is a laboratory of thought and emotion. It is a place where the reader is invited to pause, reflect, and be touched. Not to find answers, but to raise questions. Because only those who question can change.