AFTER THE CRACK



THRESHOLD 5

After the Crack

There are expressions we use lightly.

"I feel reborn."

"I have started over."

"It was a new life."

Usually they are metaphors.

Figures of speech.

Elegant ways to describe a change.

Then there are moments in which those words stop being symbolic.

And become literal.

For a long time I had imagined life as a continuous line.

With highs and lows.

With accelerations and slowdowns.

With successes and problems.

But always the same line.

Always the same journey.

Then came the day when I understood that a life can be interrupted without the body dying.

A vision of the world can be interrupted.

An identity.

A certainty.

A project.

An image of oneself.

And when it happens, the person who emerges on the other side is never identical to the one who entered.

At first one tries to resist.

One tries to save what can be saved.

To repair.

To rebuild.

To return to normality.

It is a natural reaction.

I did the same.

I wanted to recover continuity.

I wanted to retie what had been broken.

I wanted to go back to before.

Then I understood something difficult to accept.

The before no longer existed.

And it was useless to chase it.

This is one of the most costly lessons of life.

Because it requires a small mourning.

The mourning of what we were.

We often speak of the people we lose.

Much less of the identities we lose.

And yet those too deserve a funeral.

There is the moment when you stop being the son you were.

The professional you were.

The man you were.

The woman you were.

There is the moment when a version of us completes its task.

And gives way to something else.

When I passed through that season, I did not realize it right away.

I thought it was a crisis.

A parenthesis.

An accident.

Only later did I understand that I was going through a transformation.

The difference is enormous.

A crisis is something you wish to end.

A transformation is something that changes you forever.

I remember a period in which every certainty

seemed suspended.

The old answers no longer worked.

The old tools seemed insufficient.

Even some goals lost meaning.

It was an unsettling feeling.

Like walking in a familiar landscape and discovering that all the roads have changed direction.

For a while I tried to orient myself using old maps.

It did not help.

Because I had changed.

The maps were not wrong.

They were obsolete.

This is what happens in the great transitions.

The problems do not come only from the world that changes.

They come from the fact that we keep interpreting it with eyes that belong to the past.

Then, slowly, something realigns.

It does not happen in a day.

It does not happen in a week.

It happens through hundreds of small

adjustments.

Through new awarenesses.

New priorities.

New questions.

One morning you wake up and realize you are observing reality differently.

The same things.

With different eyes.

It was then that I began to understand the authentic meaning of rebirth.

It does not consist in becoming young again.

It does not consist in eliminating pain.

It does not consist in erasing mistakes.

It consists in creating a new relationship with everything that has happened.

With the wounds.

With the fears.

With the losses.

With the opportunities.

With time itself.

The second life is not born from the denial of the first.

It is born from its integration.

Everything you were continues to exist.

But it no longer governs the present.

It becomes experience.

It becomes memory.

It becomes building material.

Many people imagine rebirth as a spectacular event.

I experienced it differently.

As a slow reconstruction.

One brick at a time.

One thought at a time.

One decision at a time.

Often in silence.

Often without an audience.

Often without anyone noticing what was happening.

And yet it was happening.

In the depth of things.

As time passed I began to look at other people differently.

I understood that almost everyone is living more than one life.

Not necessarily more biological existences.

More inner chapters.

More identities.

More transformations.

We look at a face and imagine continuity.

But behind that face there could exist five, ten, twenty different versions of the same person.

All real.

All survived.

All necessary.

Perhaps this is why compassion becomes more important with age.

Because we learn to respect the invisible battles of others.

We understand that no one is only what they appear to be.

Everyone carries within a story of collapses and reconstructions.

Of losses and rebirths.

Of symbolic deaths and new departures.

Looking back, I do not idealize that period.

I do not wish to relive it.

It was hard.

Confused.

At times painful.

But I recognize its value.

Because from that transformation was born someone who did not exist before.

Someone more aware.

More attentive.

More human.

Perhaps less certain.

But much more authentic.

And this is the part that matters.

At the end of the road, when I observe the path traveled, I do not see a single life.

I see at least two.

The first built on expectations.

The second built on understanding.

The first centered on doing.

The second more attentive to being.

The first convinced it knew.

The second willing to listen.

This is why speaking of a second life contains no exaggeration.

It is not a poetic phrase.

It is not a metaphor.

It is a statement of fact.

Because there are moments in which we do not simply change direction.

We change existence.

And when it truly happens, a second life is not a metaphor.

It is what remains after the first has taught everything it could teach.