ANTONY

Ferdinando Frega — Nando the Scribe



Gillettenarrative.com

Antony

I would have liked to dissect this name, but all I am left with are the memories of those I have known, loved, lived with, and a few I have even sent to a better place. And to do anatomy you need degrees, certifications, specializations — too much bureaucracy.

I like eating roasted chicken with my hands and getting up from the table right after washing them, so I do not carry the smell around with me.

The first "Antonio" — in the feminine — was a Roman woman, older, sharp, with that summer-night confidence people have when the sea is warm, and the sand still remembers the day. She found me alone on the beach, staring at the water the way you do when you are trying to understand something about yourself without knowing what it is.

She asked me a question — simple, direct — the kind adults use when they want to see what you are made of. I answered with the only boldness I had at the time: "Safe sex." Not because it meant anything, but because it was the only phrase that sounded grown-up enough to protect me from feeling small.

She burst out laughing, took my hand, and walked me back to my mother, who exploded the moment she saw me: "What the hell has he done this time?"

"Nothing," the woman said. "He wanted to be grown-up and became something more." And she left.

My mother, trying to be my friend for once, came closer to coaxing me into telling her what happened — forgetting she was the one who had brought me into the world, and that this did not grant her any exclusive access to my thoughts.

“Nothing special,” I told her. “She dropped her car keys, bent down to pick them up, and she was not wearing any underwear — she had forgotten that too. And I asked her if she usually wears it in black, and she turned red.”

“And what did you do?” she asked. “How did you react? How did you behave?”

I did what Dad always does when you make him angry. I smile, say goodbye, and walk away.

Nando