



Andrea's Roundabout

By Staffan Snitting

At the roundabout in Arese,
you're less than ten minutes away from San Siro
where Maldini governed the black and red
and Zanetti's black and blue were plagued by a curse
until Fiat's black and white got busted.

Less than ten minutes depending on the traffic,
which isn't as busy now that the Alfa Romeo plant –
by the roundabout –
is shut down, turned into an empty shell,
slaughtered by the owners of the black and white.

The Alfa Romeo monument has lost its shine
but it still reaches towards the sky
signifying not greatness but failure and inhumanity.
No more backs are broken here.

Neither by degrading alienation,
Taylorism, or Kaizen production quotas.
No more curses behind the backs of foremen
or secret schemes during lunch.
No more glances towards the factory clock
on a Friday afternoon.

The last whistle has been blown between shifts
and the last tired sigh has been passed on
through the clock-in queues.
Never again flirts from one line to another
now that romance has left the building.
Nothing is left
but walls without a purpose
and vegetation forcing its way through the concrete of the test-course
and a guard by the main gate.
Industrial corpses, the leftovers of chronic over-capacity,
need someone to administrate the process of decay.

At the other gate the guards are different.
Paulo and his comrades watch over their heritage –
the pride of the disposable workforce –
with red flags and banners by their camp.

Their presence reveals the hollowness of the buildings.

Flesh, bone and limbs find no use here anymore

but to remind and warn.

In between the gates

Andrea fixes her pink hot pants and seeks eye contact.

She has an energy drink, a bottle of water,

and a life left to live.

And traffic jams on the way to San Siro

are no longer due to shift changes

but to negotiations between Andrea and a customer

at the roundabout between the Alfa Romeo factory gates.

Staffan Snitting has previously been published in various political publications. His nonfiction work has been discussed in radio broadcasts and even in the Swedish Parliament. He edits and publishes a fanzine in English called "Law and Order," which focuses on hardcore-punk and the straight edge subculture. He is located in Gothenburg, Sweden, where he worked as an autoworker until the economic crisis hit in 2008 and the lay-offs began. Swedish is his mother tongue, and he has had no formal education in English after leaving high school.