

# 20 Mila leghe (in fondo del mare)

## Gianmaria Testa

The first was the Cape of Good Hope  
closed by law and special decree  
so that the Pacific waves would quit  
bastardizing that other sea. Next it was the turn of Panama and Suez,  
and then of the Bosphorus and Gibraltar:  
every last wave demanded  
respect for its sovereign independence. No more exchanges of water and fish,  
no more round-the-world trips in sailing ships  
all canals were closed  
to the passage of foreign waves. Thus for a time the waters of all  
the planet's seas became calm again,  
but before long it began again: a wave said  
that it was time to end it all.  
And so it happened that one day in our local sea  
the Ionian demanded to be alone,  
and so did the Tyrrhenian and the Sicilian Strait  
and the Adriatic forthwith. In short, 'let no one mix with anyone else'  
thundered the waters of the shallows;  
'let each remain anchored in place  
and bathe only the sands of her birth.' It seemed to be over but it was only the beginning,  
and it was truly ugly to see  
in what once was a vast expanse  
the gashes of trenches rending the sea. It was only the beginning, as we said,  
because now the secessionist fever  
was sickening every single shore,  
and nothing and no one managed to say 'enough'.  
And thus from Trieste to the tip of Apulia  
from Sicily to the Italian Riviera  
every last tiny creek demanded  
independence and not in name only. But the matter went shabby  
when they seized each other drop by drop  
and, each eyeing her neighbor, said  
'go away or I'll break your face'.  
The sea was soon an assemblage of dewdrops  
of no use to fish or any creature.  
tuna, anchovies, and swordfish died,  
deep-sea vessels stayed on dry land. And then one day or (I'm not sure) one night  
something even stranger happened  
do you know the formula H<sub>2</sub>O?

Yes, the one for water that we all know. Well, hydrogen took exception  
and claimed to have a majority  
and thus the sovereign right  
to pursue now-hallowed independence. A kind of wind blew, an infinite gust,  
and the water of the seas vaporized into the sky.  
there remained a desert of salt and granite,  
but dark and deep, blacker than black.  
Song Discussions is protected by U.S. Patent 9401941. Other patents pending.

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