



BOOK EXCERPT

MOASSY, THE DOG

By Jorge A. Livraga Rizzi

Written from the unique and imaginative perspective of a dog transformed into a man, who travels the world, visiting different countries, this work is the author's way of expressing his views on some of the world's sociopolitical systems, exposing their irrationality and the duplicity of human beings, while paradoxically continuing to love them. However, it is not only a political work, but a deeply philosophical one, in which the author contemplates his own death and muses about the two infinities above and below.

BY WAY OF A PROLOGUE

Last night I felt cold. Although the thermometers recording the temperature of the air conditioning in my room indicated that it was warm, I felt cold... and a little bit anxious. No, it is not due to psychological reasons; I'm not very prone to psychological disorders, because I don't have much of a psyche. No; I think it's something more important... Perhaps the most important thing: I'm going to die. My unflinching instinct tells me so... Moreover, I have already lived for many years, too many for those of my race. I have tripled or quadrupled my normal lifespan, but now it's coming to an end.

This strange anxiety makes me want to drink water, to walk, to look through old photographs in search of friendly faces, to observe my own body with inexplicable curiosity; perhaps I want to say goodbye to it. Yes, now I am sure; I am going to die. And I cannot keep the terrible secret of my life for any longer.

I sit down in front of a typewriter; I put it on the floor to be more comfortable. Somehow, I go back to being a child again.

How strange! My breathing is not difficult, the air flows quickly into my lungs, but, as if it were stale, I cannot assimilate it and I feel an increasing sense of suffocation. I need to hurry; I need to write.

Although I don't have much time, I feel that the hours are becoming longer for me and that I will be able to complete my task. At least I try to convince myself that I will. No one will be able to help me. When we are born and when we die, we are incredibly alone. And yet, I'm not afraid... and I don't know why I'm not afraid. Those of my race, in my situation, become sad and melancholic; that is not happening to me at all. If nothing awaits me after death, what is there to fear? Nothing matters any more... Or perhaps that's not true. If I could remain in front of the typewriter, and write, write... but I get up every now and again... as if I were looking for something or trying to escape... From what? From whom? I don't know.

My name is Moassy... sorry, Dr William Ferdinand Moassy.

This is the true story of my life. It is so incredible that I don't expect anyone to believe it. But truth is always unbelievable; there is nothing more believable than a lie. This little black wooden hut that awaits me on the horizon and is my death, does not disturb me, but reminds that I was born in another one, painted white, next to centuries-old pines and a new beehive, full of golden bees, drunk on honey and the music of their own wings. My mother had a beautiful red coat, my father... I don't know; I never knew my father. I had six brothers and sisters, all of them long dead, like my mother, like the bees.

Let me tell you...



CHAPTER ONE

MY CHILDHOOD

In the depths of my time, like fragments of a boat that has sunk long ago, the memories of my childhood rise to the surface and disappear again. I see black water trying to submerge them; some of them, appearing for a brief moment, sink back forever. Others reappear again and again. I have to make an effort, in those brief intervals when they are visible, to retain something of their shapes, colours, sizes, natures...

From the darkest region, I draw the sensation of warmth and the rays of a very clear sun, peeping out, like the face of a mischievous child, between two mountain peaks. Then, enormous pine trees, many of them, of which I can only remember the powerful roots sinking into the earth towards the mysterious world of damp and deep darkness. And above, that other mystery of the heights, a mixture of blue, gold and white.

While my brothers and sisters were frolicking around, I lay still, gazing first at one infinity and then the other. And I would try to climb up the rough and ancient bark of trees, as if it were a vertical path, until I fell down, exhausted; and I would dig feverishly in the earth, but

neither the earth nor the roots ever ended. My only possibility, like that of so many beings, was horizontal. The vertical, in one direction or another, was barred to me.

Among the fallen branches, the acorns, the pale trunks of poplars, my siblings and I used to play, following invisible labyrinths, getting lost and finding our way again amid short whimpers and equally short yelps of joy. At times, I would stop and gaze at the branches that had fallen from above: they came from the mystery of the heights, but, when they entered my horizontal dimension, they lost their green leaves and turned black. The earth I had dug up dried in the sun and became pale. They were both dead witnesses that could tell me little or nothing of those two infinities that obsessed me. Giving me a gentle push, my mother would urge me to run off again with my brothers and sisters. I discovered very early on that anyone who stops to reflect, is seen by others as sick. For that reason, I have always reflected on my own.

I was always different; I don't know if I was better, but I was different from others. As soon as I could look after myself, I started to go as far away as possible from the little white hut that had witnessed my birth, following the zigzagging flight of the golden bees. And then came the fear of loneliness and confusion; the only thing I knew was where the mystery of above and the mystery of below were; on this horizontal earth I have always got lost.

And I would laboriously return to my family, to my bowl of food, where the bones of other beings who, like me, had bones of other beings who, like me, had lived between two mysteries, were being bleached by the sun. When I understood that, I was horrified and would not taste food for several days. Then, hunger proved more powerful than the horror and pity: sad prophecy!

But then came a day, a day that dawned like so many others. The clouds shook off their sleep, stretched their moving arms and rose above the high valleys boxed in between mountains. The sun was pale; the air cold. But there was nothing to indicate that anything important was about to happen to me. And so it was that, after the washing that my mother subjected me to every morning, and a hurried breakfast among the palpitating bodies of my siblings, all anxious to go out and play, I left the white hut – though I didn't know it then – forever.

My departure was absurdly simple. I ran after the bees and couldn't find my way back again. At first, I was seized with despair and used all my instincts to discover the way back, but I couldn't. I told you: on the horizontal earth I have always got lost. But, when youth makes us restless and we begin to tire of the monotony of home, we soon forget our sorrows, so I kept running about and playing, and telling myself: "I'll worry about that later."

After the blazing hand of the sun had blessed the entire arc of the sky, it began to hide behind the mountains of the horizon, and the shadows, which during the day had kept timidly close to the objects, began to separate from them in order to begin their own cycle of races, running faster and faster. The stars stood out against the firmament which had now turned violet, and a cold wind, howling like a wolf, blew down from the mountains.

Still today, so many years later, I remember that first night of solitude with a shudder... Afterwards, one becomes accustomed to solitude, even if one continues to shudder. It's strange: there's a certain part of myself which is not afraid of solitude, and even enjoys it. I imagine that it must be that part which is always alone. But there are other facets of ourselves that see solitude in a dark light, and these are so afraid that sometimes with a part of our own body we squeeze and hold onto the other part, in a parody of company. Dissimilar natures that might lead us to deduce they have dissimilar destinies! But here I have already started philosophizing and I was in the middle of telling you about my childhood, and philosophy and childhood don't usually go together.

I made myself as comfortable as I could among the many feet of an immense tree and fell asleep; I don't know for how long. But I remember feeling the warmth of the sun and, at the same time, some hands

lifting me up until I was looking at a face that was old and from which a snowy white beard hung, like an old rock. I whimpered and closed my eyes. I was no longer alone.

Shortly afterwards, a bowl of food and some words I didn't understand, but which I instinctively recognized as affectionate, restored in me a sense of peace. And they also made me aware that the little white hut where I was born, my mother and my playful siblings, had all been left behind. I was beginning a new cycle of my fantastic and incredible life.

My fingers have grown stiff on the keyboard of the typewriter, and I am intentionally delaying initiating you into my secret. I am only encouraged to keep going by the certainty that you won't believe me and that it is all true. If I were intelligent, I would find a way to express

myself, but I'm not and I never was, and now I regret it, perhaps for the first time. Everything is piling up and becoming confused in my mind and I am even doubting that I will be able to finish writing this. But... courage! I must keep going. I will tell you once and for all: I, known today as Dr William Ferdinand Moassy, who has received so many honours from different countries around the world, and has sat on university boards and legislative bodies, I am... a dog. Yes, laugh or be astonished, I am a dog. A dog who had a red coat, a wagging tail and a wet, calm nose. It is only my appearance that has been transformed, but I am a dog. Now that you know my secret, I will continue trying to explain to you how I became transformed and how I compensated for my lack of intelligence by the little use that human beings make of their own.

