Armin Greder

The Inheritance



orecchio acerbo

The old industrialist was dying.
His fading mind was clinging to the corporation
of which he had been the undisputed head.
Now all this power was fast slipping from his grip, together with his life.
The thought distressed him.

He turned to his sons:

«All this will soon be yours,» he said,
«respect what I have built and make it prosper.»

And with that he died.



The government decreed three days of mourning and honoured the late citizen and his achievements with a state funeral. The prime minister and high ranking military officers were in attendance and the archbishop himself celebrated the mass for his departed friend.

Eventually the sons got together to talk about
how to implement their father's wishes.
They talked about development and about expansion.
They talked about modernisation and progress.
And they talked about inversions and profit margins
and dividends, about offshore operations and Swiss banks
and the Virgin Islands.



But then their sister returned.

She had been travelling and had
seen the world

Maybe we should think again, she said.



We cement the land for the sake of our cars
and the fumes they are spewing are making us ill.

We litter the sea and the beaches with plastic,
our trawlers are emptying the ocean of fish.

We burn down the forest to make room for our cattle
or to plant oil palms up to the horizon.

Our mining operations are scarring the earth,
and with our oil wells we are destroying the land.

The rivers run black with our factories' waste
and our steel mills eclipse the sun with their smoke.





