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Keys for an Unwritten Poem translated by Vinio Rossi and Stuart Friebert

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KEYS FOR AN UNWRITTEN POEM

You have to know certain things to understand history. The city you see at the start is not Bergamo, it's Cremona (see also the allusion to 1751, year of the Transfer). Then: the old woman, robust but a bit weak in the head, who threatens her daughter with a cane—taunts her, widowed at forty, she married the apprentice at the mill: which explains, among other things, that business of surnames. The assistant opposite is the man who supervises the masons on behalf of the customer in contrast to the flunkie of the contractor. The war that was about to break out was the war of '15-'18 . . .

translated by Vinio Rossi and Stuart Friebert