

Fiction / Current

A gem of a novel that takes us back to the popular Seventies through the eyes of a child. A delightful read!



Paolo Nelli
Treatise on the Economy of Feeling

[Trattato di economia affettiva]

Novel

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Paolo Nelli, born in 1968, lives in London, where he teaches Italian Language and Culture at King's College. He has published short stories and novels, among which his first one *La fabbrica dei paraurti* (The Bumper Factory, 1999) and *Golden Boot* (2012).

Nello Giusti is a five-years-old boy whose family emigrated from southern Italy to seek work in Brianza, the vast industrial area in the North of Milan. Although his family's livelihood is very modest, Nello's childhood is a happy one. His parents embody traditional role models from their southern rural culture, but all around them things are rapidly changing. Money, or the lack of money as in Nello's family, plays a crucial role in his perception of the world. In the Italy of the Seventies, when daily life is clouded by strong political tension and violence, Nello «knows no revolution, no fight, no glory, and no tragedy». His life as a child revolves around the epic of small things and the amazing possibilities lurking in everyday existence, often embodied by the newest, most desirable object. Indeed, on the one hand Nello's life seems to follow the latest modern product the market has to offer, on the other he remains drawn to the simple events: summer camps, friends, days at the local church. This lost world is brought back to life in Nello's adult insights, where past and present subtly interweave. Thus almost magically, the somehow disenchanted gaze of the adult man allows access to the fascination of that untarnished childhood experience, now gone forever, and brings it back for the reader's delight.

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