1981

History: 13

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When I found my father that night, the blood smeared on his head and face, I did not know who had done it. I had loved his body whole, his head, his face, untouched, and now he floated on the couch, his arms up, like Mussolini hanging upside down in the air, his head dangling where they could reach him with boards and their fingernails, those who had lived under his tyranny. I saw how the inside of the body could be brought to the surface, to cover the skin, his heart standing on his face, the weight of his body pressing down on his head, his life slung in the bag of his scalp, and who had done it? Had I, had my mother, my brother, my sister, we who had been silent under him, under him for years? He lay in his gore all night, as the body hung all day outside the gas station in Milan, and when they helped him up and washed him and he left, I did not see it—I was not there for the ashes, I had been there only for the fire, I had seen my father strung and mottled, mauled as if taken and raked by a crowd, and I of the crowd over his body, and how could anything be good after that, how could anything be good in such a world, I turned my back on happiness, at 13 I entered a life of mourning, of mourning for the Fascist.