

HARVARD ENGLISH POETRY

Harvard Poets in WWI Italy

VILLA CÀ ERIZZO LUCA
BASSANO DEL GRAPPA

I POETI
DI HARVARD

The portico of the neo-classical temple facing the street is a plaque reveals another wonder of Ca 'Erizzo-Luke: "In this villa, in the last crucial months of the Battle of Grappa stayed poets Harvard ambulance staff of the American Red Cross: among them John Howard Lawson, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway ... "In 1918, the ship was the seat of Section 1 ARC (American Red Cross) and, by a happy combination among its drivers of ambulances, there was an 'exceptional concentration of American literary future glories, addition to the names mentioned in the inscription, there were also Sydney Fairbanks, Dudley Poore and many other students at Harvard University. For this, the group called itself 'the poets of Harvard ". the fact, historically established and widely documented, has given rise to Dr. Luke to create an important Historical Museum of the Great War. In it, there is also a "Hemingway Collection" with rare documents.

Ernest Hemingway left its indelible mark on any territory he crossed with the body and with the pen. War, The First World War, as it is well known, represented an initiation capital and for the future writer, reworking and mixing their own experience with stories of Italian soldiers gave rise to an array of wonderful stories (in addition to famous Farewell to Arms). Both l'uomo: because beyond the poses childish plays, that trait unbearably bully and show-off, it is quite clear that Hemingway was indeed inhabited by the demon of 'extreme: hence the desire spasmodic continually cross the "line of 'shadow' that separates life from death. Discarded by combat units for a defect eye, Ernest is making a last resort take as a driver for the American Red Cross ambulances. And not yet nineteen l'Europa embarks on May 23, 1918. Landed in Bordeaux, after a brief stop in Milan reaches Schio, which is headquartered in an old wool mill the Fourth Chamber of the 'ARC. But the battle of the Solstice (which broke out June 15), in the area of Pasubio, by the time you hear only distant echoes. Around here there is still a relative calm. Far too much for that soul so restless, who just arrived in the Veneto in Kansas City wrote: "Tomorrow I go to the front. Oh, Boy! I'm Really happy to be here!". And in fact, after three weeks spent sorting injured in mediation centers, playing baseball, swimming and hanging out in streams taverns, Ernest exclaims: "There is not that of the landscape, and all too. Someday l'altro soaking the section and go to see where it's war. " Said and done. At the end of the month can be transferred in the Lower Piave, where the real battles are raging, and finally l'epopea war hemingwayana goes live. The episodes of courage and heroism that will star the future "Papa" are numerous, but many those artfully invented. A little 'as he famously prepared to tell tales, a bit' by others, who over the years and its popularity l'esplosione begin to feed a lot of legends. A Fossalta di Piave, in the night between l'8 and 9 July 1918, the American boy with a backpack full of chocolate and cigarettes skips back and forth in the dark to refresh the fighters on the front line, was seriously wounded by the Austrians. And it is here that Hemingway stops at Villa Ca 'Erizzo-Luke, after his long stay in a hospital in Milan as a result of injuries sustained on the Lower Piave. We crossed the ballroom, where American soldiers consumed ciucche colossal spaces occupied by daring: l'ala where they continued to reside owners of the time. Until, finally, we arrive in the "Poets' Corner". On the left you see the famous wooden bridge designed by Palladio, the mountains right in front of the Brenta flows. If Fossalta Hemingway did for the first time to deal with death, in the same period and at the same Veneto also experienced the beauty at its highest stage. Encounter with the first account from a letter sent to parents during hospitalization in Milan: "I looked death in the face and I know. If I had to die, it would be really the easiest thing in the world ... And is much better to die in a happy childhood not yet disappointed, leave in a blaze of light, rather than seeing aging and wear out our body and shatter our illusions ". That's why, once opened up the wound no longer rimarginabile, the American writer marries the place of the greatest beauty in the eternal rest. And Ca 'Erizzo reappears so - after thirty years' - in Across the River and Into the Trees (1950): "I would like to be buried there, along the Brenta, where there were large villas with lawns, gardens, plane trees, cypresses . I know someone who might let me bury her in the earth ... I do not think I would be in the way: 'd become part of the soil where children play in the evening and the morning perhaps continue to train horses to jump and hooves trample l'erba and trout pond affiorerebbero to steal a swarm of gnats ".

There is no arena Spanish or African plateau that takes. The itinerary that best embodies, prefigurandola, the entire literary and existential parable of the great American writer, is what leads to Fossalta di Piave in Bassano del Grappa.