

*Tralummescuro*

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[excerpt]

Not like in the winter, when waning Orion rages in the sky over the darkened earth, when around four or four-thirty in the afternoon, all of a sudden, like a guillotine descending quickly and implacably, like an ax wielded by a merciless executioner, the darkness falls upon you, the black of night, and you have to use the electric lamp if you want to see anything at all. And so it is for days and months, until December 21, the winter solstice, when the days begin to lengthen out, just slightly but they do (at Christmas time the stride of a little lamb, by Ascension Day the stride of a hound), which may not be much but it's a whole lot better than nothing, and you start looking forward hopefully to spring. Not in the winter. You mean in the summer, even if on June 21, the summer solstice, the days turn back again, oh dear, but they're still quite long, oh yes, they're still quite long...

So you think and reminisce about when, as a boy, the day began fade, after a morning and afternoon spent going back and forth to the river in the most delightful of childish antics, your feet already washed by brusque and wizened hands in a barrel of water (they forced you to wash off the dust and dirt of this world because you went barefoot, forgetful that they'd just washed them the day before, and you thought that those continuous washings were

uselessly repetitive, an excess of care). You sat against the wall outside the front door in the warmth of a summer's day that was sliding toward night, reading a *Corrierino* or *Il Vittorioso* or *Tex* or *Sciuscià* or *Il Piccolo Sceriffo*, or any other comic or book you were able to get your hands on.