

Meeting Daniel & Tango

I met Daniel and Tango at the end of October 2023, a day I had specifically taken to travel from Florence to Rome in order to find a story for my project. Since I arrived in the city I was lucky enough to talk with several people who told me fascinating stories, although the vast majority didn't let me photograph them under any pretext. Several hours into that afternoon I arrived at the Trastevere neighborhood, where a few blocks after entering I met Daniel, sitting at the gate of an old house. I sat next to him and after introducing myself and asking him his name and the one of his faithful companion, I told him my project. Daniel seemed interested and after thinking about it for a few minutes he said that he would tell me part of his story with the only condition that I buy him a cold Coca-Cola. I accepted and immediately went to buy one, wondering if when I returned he would have already left that gate. But when I returned I found him again, in exactly the same place where I had left him, smiling at his dog Tango who witnessed our "negotiation". After a long drink he told me that he had arrived in Rome in 1996 from his homeland, Albania. That the deep social and economic crisis in his country had forced him to emigrate. And after his arrival in Rome things continued to get even more complicated, he got divorced and lost the little money he had, at that moment he had no other option but to sleep on the street. After a pause, Daniel continued telling me that the divorce affected him greatly and that only by living a lonely life he could understand what it means to be in good company, to love and to be loved. "Here love is the most important thing," he said literally while still caressing Tango. He had found that little dog several years ago and his name was due to the passion that Daniel had for that musical genre. I said goodbye to both of them, impressed by the way they looked at each other. In their eyes I could discover love, mutual admiration and, above all, an absolute complicity to face the reality that they had to navigate.