

A SMARTO EDITOR

Era *smarto* il dabben uomo,
Conosceva il *bisinese*,
Era amico del *polisse*
E in colleggio non andò.¹

(From an Italian American song)

[*He was smart, the good man,/ He knew his business,/ He was friends with the police/
And he didn't go to college.*]

We had to confront the real issues. I am going to tell you the story of what really happened to a naive and clueless Italian who wanted to rent out his house. He placed a paid announcement in the newspaper with a text that sounded something like this:

“For rent, masonry-built house, no heat, no super, long-term commitment, next to elevated railroad.”

He got no inquiries. After several tries, this clueless Italian went to the person in charge of classified ads to complain. The employee took a look and as soon as he finished reading he broke out laughing. “But of course” he said, “how can you think you can find anyone with this thing? Let me take care of it for you.” So, he edited the texts as follows:

¹ Colleggio. Misspelling for *collegio*. In standard Italian it properly means boarding school. In Italian American it has the same meaning as in English.

“For rent house of *bricchi* [bricks (formal Italian: jugs)], no *stima* [steam (formal Italian: estimate, respect)], no *genitore* [janitor (formal Italian: parent)], long *lista* [lease (formal Italian: list)], next to *olivetta* [elevated railroad (formal Italian: small olive)].