



POETRY BEYOND BORDERS: POEM INSPIRED BY TRAVELS TO ITALY

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MY TRAVELS

- 2019 Convivio Conference in Postignano, Italy
 - *Explored culture in the Umbrian capital known as Perugia*
 - *Ventured through the Gothic cathedrals*
 - *Tasted amazing classic dishes*
 - *Visited the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria*
 - *Explored the festive town of Spoleto, Umbria*
 - *Visited the Spoleto Cathedral*
 - *Explored the Ponte delle torri*
 - *Visited local shops*
 - *My final day I traveled the streets of Rome*

Readings

- During my travels to Italy, I was focused on four books that I was consistently reading or coming back to as a reference. The authors of the books are: Christian Wiman, Pablo Neruda, and Nicanor Parra.
- Pablo Neruda and Nicanor Parra are both Chilean poets, and their careers outside of poetry is what reeled me in. Neruda was a politician, while Parra was a mathematician and physicist.
- Christian Wiman was recommended by my mentor Dr. John Poch, his collection of essays and poems were guides to understanding how life can make and shape poets.

Deruta

Turquoise thread intertwined with stained linen
folds over you like the intrusive thoughts
that fill my mind. *What dreams have you been in?*
Silent screams escape your mouth like gun shots
silenced by a pillow. *Are you being
chased?* I venture to your side and reshape
the pillow as I imagine how freeing
asphyxiation would be. *Will you escape
in time for breakfast?*

I'd never do it—
or at least not tonight. *Maybe one day?*
Killing you would mean I'd have to commit
to taking two lives. Someday the foul play
will cease in my mind. "Babe open your eyes."
She says, "I had a dream— Everyone dies."

Rome

Her finger traces the rim of a glass.
I count nine rings on her hand and notice

the tenth sways from her neck. *The swan of the playa,*
I whisper. Her worn converse belong suspended

From telephone lines like trapeze artists stuck in time.
The once white *chongo* holds her curly hair,

while the broad shoulders support a red blouse.
Ravaged jeans hug her hips and refuse to let go.

Across the blurry bar a sign flickers: *When in Rome.*
Yesterday, I failed to notice the tattooed walls.

The dying sunflowers in empty Campari bottles.
Her glass is half full. My glass is half empty.

I follow the wall of Polaroids to the little boys room
to wash my face in hopes to find a man.

I check my phone, *the nights still young,* I dry
my hands, my face, and look through the dirty mirror.

Her chalk blue fingers set up for a quick game,
she picks her cue— I read the sign once more.

I carry over two more drinks and put one down.
I hand her the other. I take her cue and shoot my shot.

Road to Perugia

The hills of Castello Postignano
dance across the Umbrian countryside.
Las Fioritas spread through the valley.
The hills are Italy's canvas— Yellow,
Red, blue, and white stain the Umbrian plain.
Artisans travel viper roads eyeing
Muses left and right on an excursion
To Perugia. The roads spin you quickly
Like I will spin my daughter at *bailes*
Back home I knew every back road leading
To paradise. Now I know ignorance.
My head becomes heavier— I float
Seas not oceans. The same motion *cuando*
tienes sueno, yet here I am, restless.

The Trinity in Spoleto

I would much rather be a chapter
In the grand scheme of things.
The type of chapter always remembered
But never revisited.

Often, I kneel at altars
Until my knees bruise permanently
A pain that subsides with whispers
Of sweet lies. *Our father where is Heaven?*

Strike a match against my ventricles
I promise the spark is visible
Turn down the lights and track
The fires of hell rush through my veins.

On Kissing

I imagined poison ivy Kisses
Under cerulean smoked skies. Backyard
Shenanigans laced with the best Perfumes.
Wisteria's running through a window,
Rushing my body and tearing Apart
The odor of eggshells. Whipping my Back
Leaving evidence of life down my Thigh
becoming the blanket for my Torso.
We tend to hide scars and not our Wounds.
Your kiss fastened my lips and whispered "Be
Quiet"—blinded, I followed the Music —
My broken bag pipe lungs began to Breathe
With ease. I remained silent with no cheek
To complain. Our night time waltz, I Relearned
How to dance through dark corridors like Gold
Miners. I never thought it was you.
Light gripping me, suffocating my Wrist,
Dragging the room my way and still Some-
How the moon spots me, we remain Still,
her half shone face, my kiss tears her Apart.