

A RENAISSANCE

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Maniaco

I'm a frequent flyer, my long legs forced awkwardly into a middle seat, always in the back. Flying forces me to sit uncomfortably still, small, and quiet. I hate it.

One time, in transit, some thought came bursting from a chamber I thought was numb. It demanded immediate attention. Rapid fire, words flew, landing chaotically on my defenseless napkin still damp with my spilled ginger ale. The result was a poem of sorts, thought it sounded the ranting of my inner madman, written in a soul's dialect. It rattled me wholly. Took my breath away. In these quick words I wrote myself a creed of change and an ode to rebirth, and it was about time.

TrenItalia

Change came in the form of train hopping through Italy, which was like being in a sepia-toned dream, navigating foreign signs to end up lost in the maze of *TrenItalia* tracks. I was constantly spending an extra twenty euros for the fast train to mistakenly board the slow one, but I didn't mind. Slow trains are like grimy little time machines groaning to a lullaby of tired steel. Through tiny windows I lusted after the lush vineyards and idyllic country lives I knew existed only there. On a fast train it would have blipped by in a ten-minute blur.

As the stops grew more frequent things started to look more like a derailment through a wartime Fellini film than a Tuscan escape. A modern ghetto, clothes bursting from every flat brick apartment window, a mess of chickens and plastic bags, the city was getting near. What right did these neglected remnants of industrialization have dragging their greedy teeth through the oil painted hills?

Yes, Italy may be full of blunt contrasts, with her fifteenth century stones perverted by an angry teens' swirling slogan, her statuesque men reeking of cheap cologne, her sacred basilicas transforming into florescent train stations where McDonalds serve panini, but if still felt like a dream to my starving soul. Stiff plastic seats taught me to write in a new language, scribbled feverishly. Words and images were my pause button, a small grasp on time.