

Free Trade in Mitteleuropa

As ceremonial as Roman rostral columns,
Trieste's two high flagpoles front the empty sea,
The city's abstract fleur-de-lis their latest crest,
A dark, heroic statuary as their base.
It is as if the Iwo Jima photograph
Had in a retroactive time warp straightened up
To be the 20s Fascist model. In the haze
That lifts the shining Adriatic out of time,
Makes it one surface with the spaces facing it,
One era with republics, communes gone before,
As plausible as empty shipping palaces,
Their architecture of Vienna-by-the Sea,
There might arrive that skiff from *Island of the Dead*,
An unmanned Flying Dutchman of the stormless Gulf,
Or second Raft of the *Medusa*, skeletons
On board as well as sprawling Second Empire nudes;
As in a bloodied operetta uniform
Franz Ferdinand was ferried north, as once
An Emperor of Mexico was floated home.
Tourism shows decline can be an industry
Like any other. Venice does not live on glass,
Vienna on the OPEC meetings. So Trieste
Continues as Trieste, having just escaped
Becoming Trst. Outliving Yugoslavia,
Its lost "side door to Europe" waits the open door.