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Upon Seeing Myself in Giovanni's Room

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Upon Seeing Myself in Giovanni's Room

// Caroline Merritt

Waking up before the sun on a Wednesday morning,
Sneaking away before the foreign hotel could spoil my reputation;
Starved and inspired.

Wearing my little black dress from the evening before (as well as
every other evening of significance),
Humming the tune of Carmen's provocative habanera: "L'amour est
un oiseau rebelle,"

Love is a rebellious bird.

Continuing proudly though the star-studded aura of Kensington
High Street;
still drunk on Dom Perignon.

Walking until the bakeries finally opened their doors to release the
aroma of decadence.

Walking into every bakery on my path to savor their creations
through the tease of sight and smell.

Walking until the monster who growled deep within my stomach
grew too tired to perform.

Walking until the museums finally opened their doors to those
seeking enlightenment.

Walking through every decade of the V&A's exhibit on first 18th
Century Fashion, then 19th, then 20th...

Walking until I was six years old and my mother held my hand
through the same navigation.

Sipping instant coffee in my closet-sized bedroom of New Cross
Gate while

*Perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable
condition.*

Beginning Richard III for the 17th time:

*"And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover, To entertain
these fair well-spoken days, I am determined to prove a villain."*

Stopping once again, for the 17th time...

Wondering if I too should strive to be the villain; yet, at least he was
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature.

Wishing I too had such a valid excuse, then

Pouring a brandless vodka into my mug:

Silence the questioning mind.

Walking until the weight of that drink no longer felt so stagnant.
Walking to hush the growls of my awakening monster.
Walking until the thoughts of my incompetence evolve into feelings
of achievement because at least I'm
Walking for hours.
Walking until the guards of Greenwich Park finally opened their
gates to those seeking enlightenment.
Walking through space until my pace paralleled with the flow of the
Thames.
Walking until I was six years old and my father quoted Wordsworth
through the same navigation.
Walking to forget that nothing is more unbearable, once one has it,
than the freedom of
Walking for hours.