



Postcard from Italy

I'm writing this from Venezia—or Venice as it's known in English.

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It feels like a dream to be here in this mythical land of canals and gondolas and grand but crumbling palaces. For someone who loves to walk and explore (like me), this city is an urban paradise, full of discoveries at every turn and fantastically free of that noisy, dangerous, carbon-creating, fume-spewing menace—the car.

Last night my husband, daughter and I lost ourselves—literally—in a maze of ravine-like alleys, stone-paved squares, twisty streets, and bridges arching over canals.

We delved down dim, eerie passages, so narrow you couldn't spread your arms wide, then burst into flowered, lamplit streets where tourists sipped wine at tiny tables. When we finally found our hotel, we were foot-sore but exhilarated.

I love this city already, would return here in a heartbeat, but it's still a city. Homesick, my thoughts and heart keep returning to where we stayed the entire week before arriving in Venezia: an old stone house nestled beneath a petite hilltop castle in Toscana, or Tuscany (Castello Di Bibbione). I want to go back with a vengeance.

Every morning, we woke to birdsong and looked out our windows over a brightening artist's landscape of Tuscan countryside too beautiful to believe. Nearly every day, we walked a narrow country road (dodging the occasional wild Italian driver) past silver-green olive groves, vibrant vineyards, golden stubble straw fields, enduring stone villas and churches.

Lavender perfumed the air, enticing a mind-boggling array of butterflies, bumblebees, and honeybees. Dark green banks of rosemary, pointed cypresses, lizards lounging in the sun: this piece of Tuscany was very different from our rural home in Washington, and yet not so different. I felt relaxed and comfortable to a degree that, for me, would be impossible within the confines of a city, no matter how wondrous.

When I'm in the country—Italy, France, Mexico, it doesn't matter where—I feel closer to home.

Wish you were here,

~ Cherie

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