

At Como

On a Sunday in September
as I walked down to the lake front
through evening's early passeggiata
planes came swooping overhead,
momentary shadows on quick faces
talking, pensive, with ice creams,
or basking in warm air.

It was nothing like our Como
of the thirteen years before
and nothing like that daybreak,
our emergence from the dark;
no trace of it was visible
to my passing eyes now
in motorinis' hoarse falsetto
or, about to disembark,
a pleasure steamer near the shore
— and I might have been anywhere
in a pointless search for traces
amongst the latest generations,
distracted by them, in their dream
of being young, the care
lavished on not having any care.

For here was nothing to remember:
ghosts of spoiled love, satisfied,
were no longer present matter
in such brightness, and what use
coming here again to brood,
prolong within myself the proud
worn-out excuse?

PETER ROBINSON