

I saw someone waiting for the bus today and she was familiar to me. But I couldn't place her. As I was walking by she said "hi" and I guess she missed the bus, I couldn't decide if we knew each other, but it was cold so I brought her around the corner to Café Adler where the girls go when they're tired of walking, and that's where I am now.

I don't remember if I ever told you this but a few years ago I couldn't paint and I was in the habit of writing in the mornings outside, on a park bench in Schöneberg. After awhile some other jobless people started to get familiar with me, looking for cigarettes and chatting which I thought was okay but it became difficult to write, so I bought a nice suit and went to different benches around Berlin and watched the city wearing this suit, if you can imagine. Anyway, I had a spot on the corner of Greifswalderstraße one morning in the spring and this young woman on a bicycle came down the hill, her hair was flowing in the wind, and her skin was light brown, maybe she was Greek, or Italian, she was an incredible image of freedom, or of spring in Berlin, which is really the same thing anyway. Then, out of the corner of my eye I saw this truck coming down the hill behind her carrying a concrete staircase and the truck catches up to her, just as she's about to go through the intersection, the front wheels of this truck start turning right. She's only about half as tall as the tire and within about six inches so the driver can't see her and he's making the turn. They're getting closer and her hair, this rich light brown hair is running all along the stainless steel bumper now, it lasts three seconds, her hair sliding and slightly, playfully, slapping against the steel, the tip of each strand is lighter in colour and it curls a bit as if bleached by the sun, or the ocean had thinned it out, she must have been within three or four inches, and now she's going under the bumper, I thought. And then somehow, I couldn't believe it, she breezed through the intersection. The truck driver made the turn. He still hadn't seen her. He looked to the right, toward me actually and by now I'm standing up with my pencil on the ground. I nod at him. And when he's driven past me I see that she has headphones in her ears and, it's unbelievable, she hasn't even noticed a thing.

So here I am this morning with a woman from Paris in Café Adler and it's time for her to go back and wait for the bus. She takes out her headphones and suddenly my heart is thumping against my chest, I know why she looks so familiar, but I can't tell her I had dreams about her; her hair sliding a long a steel bumper for three years. So I just keep it cool and ask her what she is listening to. She doesn't want to tell me, "a hint?"

"It's Baroque"

*"Erbarme dich"*

"very close" she says and then she's gone. So here I am now writing to you from Kurfürstenstrasse with rain running down the window at Café Adler thinking about Telemann and all the close calls I've had, or might have had without even knowing it and I thought I should write to see how you're doing.

Aaron