

Transport

by [Sydney Lea](#) in the [March 9, 2004](#) issue

After the tourist's two blue insomniac nights,
patrols of all that had been lost, botched, or sweet
but severed, during the Albinoni he went off,
up, away, so that, say, the sudden recall
of his late mother in grainy portrait in her yearbook,
over the captions: "brightest," and—in the quaint patois
of the gentry during their Depression—"most attractive,"
and the despair she may have felt as children and alcohol
supervened: if any such feckless maundering
occurred to him . . . Well, off, up and away went she
as well, borne heavenward on the andante's strains.
Two trumpets. One great organ. Peace might well lie at hand.
Peace was at hand. During Martini's toccata in C,

a vision of his tall naked wife, under a tall naked sun,
produced in him in the church a subtle stirring, even
a mild tumescence, which he would otherwise have described
as out of order, were it not that this newer order arched
so beyond any scheme he'd normally posit that within it all things
were possible, as they are, it is said, with God, Who
during the Manfredini revealed Himself to our tourist
in what he construed as His human form, His prison garb
stained and rent, His savaged body hefted by men
and women—their countenances looking more angry than mournful—
from a loud place like that bar on the corner of Thakurova
and Evropska, which he had walked by that evening on his way
to transport: the Metro, which carried him into this old quarter

in a car along with that beauteous, amorous young Czech couple
with their red-tipped white staffs and whited eyes,
then spilled him out to rumpsteak with garlic, alone, and then

to the 9 p.m. concert, alone. During the Ave Maria
of Schubert, he saw a joy he hadn't seen in the tears
of St. Peter as rendered faceforth by an artist, Swiss of all things,
unknown to him till that forenoon in the Castle gallery.
The wailing weanling calves of his childhood now placidly grazed.
The famous small songbirds lit on the outstretched arms of Francis.
Peter's tears had appeared only woeful this morning. The hour of music
concluded, the tourist walked, though it felt still like soaring,
his cobblestone-wearied heels devoid of any pain,
back into this world, broken and joyous and praying,

"Never to be the same." Never perhaps again.