

A TUSCAN WINE TRAIL

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Alone one night in Florence, I walked along a cobble-stoned street and saw a zig-zag trail of purple puke along the road. The big piles told me that a stumbling drunkard had eaten pasta and drunk too much Chianti. I walked quickly with a leery eye on the ominous piles. I didn't mind keeping my focus on the ground since whenever I walked alone in the city I always kept my head and eyes down. I never looked at the people on the street because I believed that a split second of eye contact with a man in Florence would be interpreted as an invitation for sex.

Just then, I felt a man approach me from behind and heard him comment in Italian on the phosphorescent shine of my hair.

From experience, I knew that if I ignored him he would follow me and

if I talked to him he would follow me anyway. Since there were hardly any people on the street and I was walking alone late at night, I opted to talk to him and hope that after a few minutes he would leave me alone. The trick was to not appear afraid.

I turned to him and said thank you and recognized his straw hat and dark beard. He was the same man that I had seen earlier that night in the Piazza della Repubblica. I had been sitting alone in the square writing in my notebook and he had sat next to me waiting for me to look up at him. I ignored him while I wrote furiously about these pests that always sought my attention because I was alone. I hated him and all the others for making me feel vulnerable, for making me get up and constantly move. I got up and moved to another bench, but after a few

