

TOP 22, June 2010

Were I to design a writer's studio I would place it somewhere above the roof tops of other houses looking down on a river where ships pass by, facing green hills covered with vineyards maybe. It would have to be large enough to walk around the desk – and be it only in thoughts – but small enough not to lose track of the awaiting work while opening the fridge, and most of all: full of light. And if there were a pretty little town close by with bakeries offering fancy cakes and Kaffee Melange, galleries and museums where you are allowed to laugh, churches vibrating with sounds – and inns of course with gardens and patios where the wine is not only good but cheap, then, well the setting would be ideal – as in TOP 22 – for writing and being.

And writing and being is just what I did, knowing that somewhere in this building there would always be some kind person to answer my questions if I had any, to chat with me if the ceiling was threatening to fall on my head. However, I was happy here without any question and some evenings when the ceiling came closer I mounted the stairs to the balcony pondering Götting in the distance in crypto-catholic reference while the last sunbeams warmed my neck.

Like anybody given the chance to be here I found things I liked in particular: The wooden café at the landing stage where cyclists and walkers take a rest and the bearded driver of the city tour tram is having a chat, the 'Strandbad' that is not at the strand at all and firmly in the hands of the local teenies, the way the sun rises early in the morning and douses the sky in pink, the swans gliding along the river bank opposite, and one night I was woken by the crackling of fireworks and stood at the window watching in awe the bursting balls of light.

It was a privilege to be here, a productive and most pleasant time with only one fault: it vanished far too quickly. What will remain are scenes in a book,

dialogues between characters I could listen to undisturbed, images and moments that will remain in my memory and become part of other books I will write in other places.

For all this I say: Thank you!

Gabrielle Alioth