



Image from Insight Cities

Kenneth DiMaggio

Ode #1 to Friedrichshain, East Berlin, Late 1990s

Apartments that look like brick
factories and above one of them
a giant bulb hangs above a cartoon
carnage

Inside an apartment that
only needs a pencil
to unlatch the door
Karsten kicks a soccer
ball against a wall
spray-painted with
an Anarchist A
in a large circle

while in the kitchen
Markus & Monika mix hashish
into American cigarettes

As the hashish
flows out
music flows in

Bach
or something like that

Can you see the Wall
from here?
—I the American ask

A large disconnected
bulb hangs above a landscape
sparkling with the first letter
of the alphabet

The night above
swirls like a sky
in a famous painting
but without the figure
that screamed it

And Karsten and
the latest visitor
and perhaps squatter
share a Marlboro

Ode #10 to the 10th arrondissement in Paris

To see the saint,
I would have to sniff
the perfume of Madame
Le Bitch while smelling
the sweat of the cleaning
lady from Senegal or
Burkina Faso and how
last night's beer must have
smelled on me as I knelt
between them at the marble rail

But, St. Catherine Laboure,
if I do not write poems
of dubious quality,
I will be just another
drunkard in a 1-star hotel
in the 10th arrondissement
where only the refugees,
criminals and illegal
immigrants go to in Paris,

a city that exists somewhere
between a dowager who secretly
drinks (as my nose smells)
and an immigrant probably
illegal who quickly genuflects
and leaves when a uniform
enters the church that needs
its illegality and its drink for it
to shrine a saint who rests
peacefully in a glass coffin
with her large white bonnet
unfolding
like a lily on her head

Kenneth DiMaggio's work has appeared in *Floyd County Moonshine* and *The Chiron Review*. He writes: "Somewhere between the velvet painting of a French Impressionist landscape in my red, white & blue collar bungalow growing up and reading Camus' novel *The Stranger*, where kids my age were supposed to drag-rade GTOs or Camaros and not read books, I fell in love with Paris, or the idea of it. Eventually, as I read more books, I would fall in love with other cities, some of which I vowed one day to visit. But if the real *Mona Lisa* was much smaller than expected (and hard to get close to, with all the tourists taking selfies next to it), the chapel shringing the incorruptible body of a saint* and the bed bugs in the mattress of my 1-star hotel in the seedy 10th arrondissement, showed me another beauty to this city, subject of one of these poems; the other of a city that has a black-eyed kind of beauty." DiMaggio teaches humanities at Capital Community College, in Hartford, Connecticut.

*In the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal.