



The city was a landscape by Ippolito Caffi covered with snow. That's at least what I thought at the beginning and as I decided to pursue that image I saw snow everywhere: like a sheet of glass broken into a million intangible pieces; it lay on roof tiles, balconies, shutters, thresholds, window sills, and embankments depicting facades and the spread of water with glittering specks of white dust.

The glass seemed white and it didn't look like ice any more, it was like crumbling marble splashed by water from a hidden source and the whole world was flooded but I couldn't see the source. I could feel its pulse in the shining sun. The sky was completely white until a few drops of cerulean blue leaked from underneath the canvas. I was freezing at first but managed to get my breath back as I slowly succumbed to the blinding inertia of unexpected serenity.

A tricky dream transformed the sultriness of summer into a wintry cold. But the morning came gleaming with ardent light and we had to face yet another day of breathless heat tormenting our senses. The only way out was to forget and turn immediately toward the sunset. It was in the direction of the port, somewhere by the Zattere, where summer and winter would cross their opposite ways shortly before dusk.

But first the sun, before it could finally free itself from the morning whiteness and rest on a soft divan of red velvet awaited by us with ice cold glasses in our hands, had to become hotter and hotter to make the ice melt and ooze tiny drops on everything that passed beneath the sun a moment before it set. There, in the one and only point of the planet the rusted hulls of ships and boats, the lagoon in seaweed gloom, and the sweaty stones of the city at its undying last gasp would find their endless immortality.

And if in this instant of time out everything were covered by snow it would have been quite all right because it is only in August that snow can float on water forever



Ippolito Caffi, "Venezia, Neve e nebbia in Canal Grande, 1842, oil on cardboard, Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia
Robert Morgan, Verso Marghera, 2009, oil on canvas, private collection London