



A Ghost in Trieste

Joseph Cary

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Gem of the Adriatic, Trieste sparkled and beckoned through the pages of poets and novelists. Drawn there in search of literary ghosts, of the poet Umberto Saba and the novelists Italo Svevo and James Joyce, Joseph Cary found instead a city with an imaginative life of its own, the one that rises, tantalizing from the pages of this book. The story of Cary's travels, *A Ghost in Trieste*, is also a tale of discovery and transformation, as the bustling world of port and airplane, baggage and trams and trains becomes the landscape of history and literature, language and art, psychoanalysis and the self.

Here is the crossroads of East and West. A port held in turn by the Romans, the Venetians, the Austrians, the Germans, the Slavs, and finally the Italians, Trieste is the capital of nowhere, fertile source of a unique literary florescence before the First World War. At times an exile home and an exiled city. "I cannot claim to have walked across it all,:" wrote Saba, the poet of Trieste in 1910 of the city Cary crosses and recrosses, seeking the poetry of the place that inspired its literary giants. Trieste's cultural and historical riches, its geographical splendor of hills and sea and mysterious presence unfold in a series of stories, monologues and literary juxtapositions that reveal the city's charms as well as its seductive hold on the writer's imagination. Throughout, literary and immediate impressions alike are elaborated in paintings and maps, and in handsome line drawings by Nicholas Read.

This "clownish and adolescent Parsifal," this Trieste of the "prickly grace," this place "impaled in my heart like a permanent point," this symbol of the Adriatic, this "city made of books" — here the book remakes the city. The Trieste of allusions magically becomes a city of palpable allure, of warmth and trying contradictions and gritty beauty. Part travel diary, part guide book, part literary history, *A Ghost in Trieste* is a brilliant introduction to an extraordinary time and place. In Joseph Cary, Trieste has found a new poet, and readers, a remarkably captivating companion and guide.

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