

Hilary Sideris

Pane

I'm not myself when
I say *ciao bello*,

hello, goodbye, beau-
tiful — from medieval

Venetian I'm your
Slave — I serve pane

with every meal
in your language,

effuse as I never
do in mine.

Sack

Middle Dutch *sak*,
sakkos in Greek,

canvas, burlap,
Ziploc, Spanish wine,

loose gown, purse,
plunder, *saccheggiare* —

*con te mi diverto un
sacco,*” says my *sposo*

with *sarcasmo*, then
falls asleep in the bean

bag chair — I have a sack
of fun with you, *amore*.

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Poor

This is not
your *bel paese*

where the dead
have earned

the rank of *povero*:
dad gave mom's

money to a church
she went to only

to appease him,
though she failed.

This is the country
where she's still

talking behind
his back, as if

death were just
a door he might

reopen out of
spite, take her

bottle to the sink
& pour.

Comma

Give us a break
from unsubtle

exclamations,
interrogatives:

Don't make me
hiss, *I'm not your*

ex! when you ask,
Can we talk?

Let us run on,
splice a story

together, more
and than *end*,

forego full
stop drama.

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Bank

In that frigid,
fluorescent-lit

office, conditioned
to the comfort of a thick-

necked, cuff-linked man
explaining in a wink

how my funds shrank —
the market goes up

& comes down — I think
what a lush green lawn

I spent my childhood
on, though when

I went back, it was
just a dusty lot.