



Emily Sundblad

A Summer Without You

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You escape into a dark bar in the afternoon in the middle of summer. Air conditioned so much that you shiver. You rest your body on a sofa or bar stool, sipping a cocktail, and the spirits change the feeling in your soul while your gaze wanders into a painting or mural, maybe a combination of a decorative landscape and storybook imagery, perhaps with sexual innuendo. A celebrity or cultural icon may be depicted. Or a deity or scene from another time. It's a little like looking into a dream, if a dream were like a club you could walk into and order a drink, and if the club contained landscapes, seascapes.

The size of the painting or decorative panels have been determined by the size of the bar or the size of the dining room. Painting adding space to space, for you.

The paintings enhance the effect of the alcohol, food or romance and turn the interior into an escape and a dreamscape. An escape perhaps from motherhood or work or anything quotidian. An hour like this sends you home with a dream to give your life, your child, your wife, your dog. Even death needs an hour like this in a bar sometimes.

Blooming epebes, female Satyrs, Oriental sages, owls, snakes: we will find them all, as well as Punchinello and Death, within the pages of this book, along with Venus, Time, Moses, numerous angels, Cleopatra, and Beatrice of Burgundy—a motley company always on the go.

Calasso makes clear that Tiepolo was more than a dazzling intermezzo in the history of painting. Rather, he represented a particular way of meeting the challenge of form: endowed with a fluid, seemingly effortless style, Tiepolo was the last incarnation of that peculiar Italian virtue of sprezzatura, the art of not seeming artful.

(on the book *Tiepolo Pink* by Roberto Calasso, www.penguinrandomhouse.com)