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ARCHIPELAGO; SONNET FOR REDENTORE

Archipelago

There are other lives I might have led
crouched in the foothills of Pordenone,
meandering along the shoals of the Piave,
stabled in a farmhouse in Maser, impatiently
pacing the platform at Ponte nelle Alpi.

They are lives crouched over endless rounds
of bastoni, played in a truck-stop bar
in Refos, or Castion or god-forsaken-Trichè;
an ever-mounting Tarot deck of

forgotten images:
here we are thugging about in Chioggia,
here we are kissing
beside the grotty cathedral in Vicenza.

I am tumbled from this archive,
strewn across the cool marble floor.
I stand marooned on private islands
of uncertainty, potential:
a vast, sweeping, uncharted archipelago.

Sonnet for Redentore

Dark shapes bob in the kiss of the bay,
and moorings jink a metallic symphony.
Corks pop and cutlery scrapes away
late dinner. Across military pontoons we
Jesus-step across the sea towards Giudecca;
looking back, the soot-black cupola
of Salute looms, a Baroque full-stop to
plague days. Overhead we hear the whir

and fizz of fireworks, a cascading,
coloured fugue; the sky adrip with
Pollock flicks of dying embers, falling,
Centuries of mundane death transform
in streaks of neon-green and yellow-white,
an orgasmic and torrential rain of light.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Venzo is a poet and lecturer working in southwest Victoria. Over many years he has published in the areas of media and communications and literary studies. He was recently conferred as a Doctor of Philosophy after the successful completion of a manuscript of poetry about his relationship to Venice and the Veneto titled *Archipelago*, which was accompanied by an exegesis exploring aspects of his poetic practice, including self-translation.