

ROARSHOCK PAGE

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Paris

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Autumn has come to Paris and over the northern world. The summer of 2016 was a long and arduous one, full of achievement as well as hardship. This second international edition of ROARSHOCK PAGE reflects the warmth of the long days that have been experienced, and so much that has been learned. This edition is, and will be forever, dedicated to the memory of Lisbeth Roessler, who died on April 17th this year, and today, October 1st, is her 95th Birthday. As part of her identity, Mrs. Roessler was the Grandma of D. A. Wilson, editor and publisher of this page, and she literally saved him decades ago when he was a desperate young man, by simply passing along a bit of money. "You need money!" she always said, urging him to keep whatever job he had, and find a better job, and she also left a bit more money behind for him, which helped pay for this year's European journey.

ROARSHOCK EUROPE JOURNAL 2016

Across the Bodensee (Lake Constance) on ferry boat rocking and rolling the roiling ice cold, green blue waters from Rorschach to Lindau. Farewell to the Confoederatio Helvetica (Swiss Confederation), the sturdy land of thrift and wealth, and hello Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Germany) and a return to the European Union, where also can be found thrift and wealth, along with a cacophony of contradictions and diversity. The rambling rails of trains. The bursts of end of summer heat gave way to waves of rain as autumn begins.

Oktoberfest began with traditional Bayern (Bavarian) people sour at hoards of outside interlopers pouring into München (Munich), displaying much loutish behavior, even while those some locals and their relations raked in the visitors' cash. Hauptbahnhof (central train station) crawling with humanity and heavily armed police, machine guns at the ready against unrest, and especially to thwart any possible attacks by the suicide death cultists who are a plague and scourge on our modern world.

Night trains are not as easy a ride for old Roarshock as they were a decade, or even 6 years, ago. The young man in the compartment was from the rural Midwest of the United States, drunk on Märzenbier. He proclaimed this to be his first trip to Europe. He said he was 28 years old and had told his mother that he would not call

home every day. He passed out and slept all the way to Italy.

In Venezia (Venice) it is free to roam the ancient twisted streets, to cross the bridges and watch boats on the canals, but that's about all: you have to pay to pee. Still, art and splendorous decay are everywhere, and without invitation balconies and mysterious private courtyards can be glimpsed through holes in tall garden walls. Yes, there is every opportunity to pay admissions in Venice, and some, like the Gallerie dell'Accademia, are well worth the price. Filled with mighty works of the Venetian school, here are great masterpieces by Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese, and the workshop of Giovanni Bellini, and also works of medieval painters. They even have a Caravaggio on display. But the true Rorschach Test in those halls is feeling the spirit of the great artists reaching forward centuries from their presences, when Venice was a world empire. Fresh fish from the lagoon, espresso and wine in the Campo Santa Margherita, endless tourists with hotel maps, and the real Venetians going about their routines as always.

For me it was more Venetian attics and dreams. As on my previous visit, the hotel where I stayed lodged me in an attic room. That first trip in 2009, I had a devastating nightmare wherein a small angry ghost was very annoyed and berated me for being there in the room. I awoke in great fright and sprang up out of the bed. I kept the lights on for the remainder of the night. This time, also in Dorsoduro, the hotel was in what had started as a medieval Venetian palace. Up top of the worn marble stairs, in the attic room each night I dreamed a whole and vivid life and adventures. This is all I recall for the details of that life and time are somewhere behind the ancient walls. The last night in Venice that dream continued until a moment when I realized I had died. I was dead and death had closed in all around me in a darkness incredibly lonely, and feeling so sad and sorrowful that the life and adventure I knew were over, and I was cut-off from them forever. So I awoke thus in the cool night of my present time and life, disturbed and unsettled, but I did not need to turn an electric light on, feeling no ghosts about.

Having barely visited Italy, a train clickity-clacked back north, to cross the Brenner Pass, as has been done by countless others for centuries, including my parents on several occasions, and myself once before, only that

time I was heading down the mountains into Italy for my first visit. I was making good use of the water closet when somebody banged hard on the door. When I emerged it was the Austrian boarder police, and they did not crack a smile, but after they looked at my U.S. passport, they thanked me and continued through the train.

Back in Munich, the weather had turned lovely and the Oktoberfest was in full swing. So I greatly enjoyed the flashing lights and whirling rides, and all the noisy sounds as the twilight turned to night. I drank beer and ate a pretzel and made it back to the station in time for one last grueling night train heading north.

Amsterdam: a city of great cats with great attitudes. On every visit here, I have been charmed by the cats of Amsterdam. This was the first visit ever that I did not stay up by the Vondelpark. This time I got a hotel room downtown in the Centrum near Amsterdam Centraal train station. Convenient, and perfectly quiet in my room, but step outside into the din of the everlasting party. It was a hot day on Saturday, and a balmy Saturday night. All through the Centrum the sidewalk cafes and bars overflowed the streets with boisterous patrons drinking beer and spirits. The air thick with cannabis and tobacco smoke. Everywhere merriment as holiday makers from the earth's four corners and all points between indulged their appetites for hedonistic pleasure, while the locals continued to serve them and make more money. On Sunday the revelry will continue at just a slightly lower roar. More space opens up to appreciate other intellectual grandeur here — In art, books, music, engineering and science. Amsterdam remains truly one of the world's greatest cities.

Back in Paris for a final 2016 European weekend and to further explore the paths where expatriate writes walked many decades ago, to pass by the entryways of buildings where they lived (and missing the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival going on back home in SF — the math of opportunity favored another weekend in Paris over the beloved annual ritual). Monday morning I'll board my plane to return to San Francisco, which I love, where I live and work. I'll be happy to be back off the road, but ready again soon to return to Europe which has so much more to show me. I hope the time apart won't be too long.

— D. A. Wilson



OCTOBER ALMANAC

- 10/01 1921 Lisbeth Holz Roessler born in Cincinnati.
- 10/03 1957 California State Superior Court ruled that Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* was not obscene.
- 10/05 1857 City of Anaheim, California founded.
- 1955 Disneyland Hotel opened in Anaheim.
- 10/06 1723 Benjamin Franklin arrived in Philadelphia
- 1876 American Library Association founded.
- 10/09 1940 John Lennon was born in Liverpool.
- 1941 Brian Lamb, C-SPAN founder, was born.
- 10/12 1938 Warren Hinckle born in San Francisco.
- 10/15 2016 FULL MOON
- 10/16 1947 Bob Weir was born in San Francisco.
- 10/17 1814 Eight were killed in London Beer Flood.
- 10/22 1920 Timothy Leary born, Springfield, Mass.
- 10/23 1958 The Smurfs first appeared in *La flute à six schtroumpfs* by Peyo in *Spirou*.
- 10/26 1776 Benjamin Franklin left for France to seek support for the American Revolution.
- 10/27 1275 Traditional founding of Amsterdam.
- 10/28 1886 Statue of Liberty dedicated in New York Harbor and first ticker tape parade took place spontaneously afterwards in NYC.
- 10/29 1787 The opera *Don Giovanni* by Mozart was first performed in Prague.
- 1863 International Red Cross formed, Geneva.
- 10/30 2000 Steve Allen died in Los Angeles.
- 2016 NEW MOON
- 10/31 1922 Benito Mussolini made Prime Minister of Italy.
- 2016 HALLOWEEN

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Calling for Contributions! ROARSHOCK PAGE invites submissions of art, photographs, poetry, and micro-prose, to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

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