

Salzburg, Republic of Austria, July 2006

by [Melaney Poli](#) in the [July 8, 2015](#) issue

*In order not to repeat history, it is not enough to know it,  
we must know ourselves, and our complicity.*

—Schilling

Some days you have to take what you can  
get, and that day my mother was too sick  
to find yet one more crowded pavement café

and the worst of it was, sitting there in  
my habit, I had to see it all unfold: the tired  
couple with their small child, the empty table

and the promise of refreshment, and then  
the waiter descending in a blaze of jeers,  
scathing looks and torrid gestures, and watch

the husband and wife gather their dignity  
and leave, unwelcome only for the offense  
of resembling too much the enemy du jour

and I had nowhere to go to, nowhere to  
hide my shame, no means of protest when  
the waiter returned and served us sweetly,

set the coffee before me, and the only way  
I could ask *is a veil any better than a chador?*  
was to say, simply, *Dankeschön*