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A Seasonal Odyssey

Michael Donovan



Lago Bianco in early spring. *Photo: Bremgarten.*

It's winter up here at Ospizio Bernina. Lago Bianco lives up to its name, with ice-floes afloat on its still, deep water. The land round with snow on appears all the same.

The nose of the train dips into the snow-shed, the brakes grind and squeal as we drag round the bend. The Devil's Nose curve shows us what is awaiting, Le Prese and lake, as we slowly descend.

But where are we going? Not that way, it's certain. We curve to the west, and a glacier espy. Then back through more snow-sheds, to the east we're now steering. At times it appears that the train's learned to fly!

Through many a curve, tunnel, snow-shed and cutting the train rattles onwards, then turns once again. We see in the valley the town Poschiavo, away down below us, set out on the plain.



Looking down the valley towards Poschiavo. *Photo: Bremgarten*

It's springtime down here in the Val Poschiavo, the grass is all lush, and there's flowers galore. The cattle are grazing, the hoers are hoeing, now we're here at last on the flat valley floor.


By roadside the train carries on to Le Prese, a neat little village, and with it the lake, 'twixt the road and the lakeside' meandering onwards, 'till we reach Miralago, and put on the brake!



The main piazza in Poschiavo. *Photo: Bremgarten*

The valley steps downwards; the line twists and wanders, and now reaches Brusio, a village well known. Another step downwards, the line makes a spiral, the brakes and the flanges continue to groan.

At last we are clear, on through gardens and orchards the train is now running; we're nearing the end. We come to the border at Campocologno, as a tram we're now running round many a bend.

It's summer down here at the city Tirano. The sun gazes down on the end of the track. We started in winter; we've now come to summer. The best ice-cream sundaes will welcome us back! 



A vintage train crosses the square outside the cathedral at Tirano. *Photo: Jason Sargerson*