

ISSN 0976-8165

*The Criterion*



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An International Journal in English

Bi - Monthly Refereed & Indexed Open Access eJournal

April 2014 Vol. 5, Issue- 2

5<sup>th</sup> Year of Open Access

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## **A Sensuous Pause**

**Frank Zahn**

I come to you, Santa Barbara,  
in late spring when poets gather  
at the Miramar to laugh and cry.  
The sun burns off the morning haze  
and warms the yellow sand beneath my feet.  
I watch sea gulls monitor the endless rush  
and retreat of the surf in search of food.  
Quiet breezes cool my skin,  
and I taste sea salt on my lips.

The land abounds with palms and pines  
and birds of paradise that reach  
into the sky and watch over me.  
Along city streets and Highway 101,  
and in parks and gardens,  
I see blue and pink hydrangeas,  
jacaranda trees laden with purple blossoms,  
and cascades of red and purple bougainvillea.  
I smell honeysuckle, lavender, and star jasmine.  
The thought of lemons and oranges  
ripening in backyards and foothill groves  
makes my mouth water for fresh-squeezed  
orange juice and lemonade.

I watch each day end with a dazzling sunset  
from a lofty Spanish tile and stucco home  
I rent in the foothills.  
As the reds and yellows of the sunset  
fade into twilight, and the sea air turns chilly,  
I look forward to light supper and restful sleep.

Each year, I am tempted to give up my life  
in another place and remain with you, Santa Barbara,  
but alas, you can be no more than a sensuous pause  
—a complement, not a substitute.  
Like a soft exquisite woman with warm breasts and loins,  
you caress, heal, and renew my spirit,  
then take your place in my memories.