

Golden Prague

The city **has always been** called Golden Prague. When I first **saw** it, in 1975, it was gold - misty, hazed with late afternoon sun which **struck** the dust of the tall grave windows of old apartment houses and **picked** up the glint of the gilt knobs of the Powder Tower and the decoration of the art nouveau buildings. The air itself **seemed** golden, as if the haze **were** filtered through a thin gauze of gilt mesh. This, I **had thought**, is the gold that floods the backgrounds of medieval religious paintings, the gold of icons which **takes** the place of the more modern technique of perspective.

I **was taken** with the gold. The gold of the medieval paintings, but especially the gold of the city, the way the city **seemed** to glint. I **asked** someone I **met** in a coffee-house about this strange, glittery light. He **said** it was pollution and I **suppose** it is. But the initial impression **remained**.

(A Romantic Education by Patricia Hampl. Houghton Mifflin Company 1992, p. 215)