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**05/08/2010**

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Working holiday

We have two holidays booked this year - one is in France; the other, Italy. I am looking forward to France for gastronomic reasons, and Italy, for celestial ones. Although the Somerset countryside is at it's most luscious at this time of year, it is grand architecture that I miss most in the land of hamstone cottages and rabbit runs. The verges, decked with cow parsley and red campion have become like a virtuous vegetarian diet, and what I crave is some chili con carne - a baroque Madonna, enthroned under a gold canopy, encircled by lights under a towering baldacchino, topped by angels blowing bugles.0 To use a musical analogy, living in the countryside is like listening to a long passage of Debussy, and what I'm missing is a bit of Wagner. Tom, of course, sees it differently. His ideal of happiness is a holiday spent alone with Brenda, on a grassy knoll in Somerset. Or so he says. He seems happy enough to jet off to Italy, so long as we don't come with him. Still, sounds like he has come up with an ingenious plan, to give the impression of joining in the family holiday, while actually, not. While we are out in Italy, he has booked himself onto a long truffle hunt, somewhere miles away from the villa where we are staying. Work, you see.