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Angel

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

■ I so envy those who live in Madrid or find themselves there with regularity, for they are gifted with opportunity to spend more and more of those sacred moments with Joan and Angel. It is a thrill to sup with them, to try to digest the tapas between the convulsions of laughter, or to listen to Joan strum her dreamy flamenco music on the guitar, or to listen to either recite something in Spanish in the perfect classical style. But, the most wondrous of all things in Spain and in Madrid, the most precious, is to walk from one place to another with Angel Berenguer, a peregrination and conversation that always reminds me of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony - endless unpredictable themes and multitudinous endings. And, indeed, for a New Yorker who is unrelentingly anxious to get from one point to another, it is without fail a quite impossible travel, for Angel has no idea of how walking is usually accompanied by some sense of schedule and destination. You take six steps and Angel suddenly stops, as if the most wonderful and enlightening epiphany has entered his body, and he orates then without a hint of pomposity on any one of more than forty seven thousand subjects in which he has complete understanding and command. And, then, suddenly, you are walking again, this time in small steps, until the process repeats itself, stop, walk, stop, walk, so many stops and walks that you usually forget entirely where it is that you were going to begin with. But, the most memorable thing about this traipse is that it does not matter where you were going, for as you recapitulate the journey you will realize that it is the conversation, the most interesting and exciting talk, that is carried by each and every step, no matter how large or small, that conveys the beauty and intelligence that is Spain.