

Poets

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Autumn at the End of *The Third Man*

What could Joseph possibly have said to Alida
if she'd paused to consider him
on her long way down the cemetery road?

Leaves left their trees and turned,
slow as Ferris wheels
against an Austrian sky, and though

Joseph was within seconds of his last
lonely cigarette, there were still (it seemed)
a thousand chances for Alida to pause,

for two near-lovers to gaze across
a grand moment at each other, Anton Karas'
zither score inoculating the season.