



# Invisible cities

*A collection of images generated  
with Nvidia's GauGAN2 model,  
using text excerpts from William  
Weaver's English translation of  
Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities*

Method: Images were created using Nvidia's public model resource located at <http://gaugan.org/gaugan2>. The italicized text on each slide are direct quotes from Invisible Cities that were used as the sole user input to generate the image. For each city, I selected a short descriptive snippet of text directly from the text of the novel to use as the model's input. No words were changed, although in some cases I edited the text to shorten it as long text strings were not always accepted by the model. After inputting the text, I used the model's "random style" function until it generated a result that I found accurate, visually appealing and/or interesting.



## Diomira

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ديميلا

*"A city with sixty silver domes, bronze statues of all the gods, streets paved with lead, a crystal theater, a golden cock that crows each morning on a tower."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Isidora

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*“A city where the buildings have spiral stair-cases encrusted with spiral seashells, where perfect telescopes and violins are made, where the foreigner hesitating between two women always encounters a third, where cockfights degenerate into bloody brawls among the bettors.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Dorothea

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*“Four aluminum towers rise from its walls flanking seven gates with spring-operated drawbridges that span the moat whose water feeds four green canals which cross the city, dividing it into nine quarters, each with three hundred houses and seven hundred chimneys.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Zaira

↳

*“City of high bastions. I could tell you how many steps make up the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades' curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Anastasia

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*“A city with concentric canals watering it and kites flying over it.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Tamara

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*“Streets thick with signboards jutting from the walls. The eye does not see things but images of things that mean other things: pincers point out the tooth-drawer’s house; a tankard, the tavern; halberds, the barracks; scales, the grocer’s. Statues and shields depict lions, dolphins, towers, stars.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

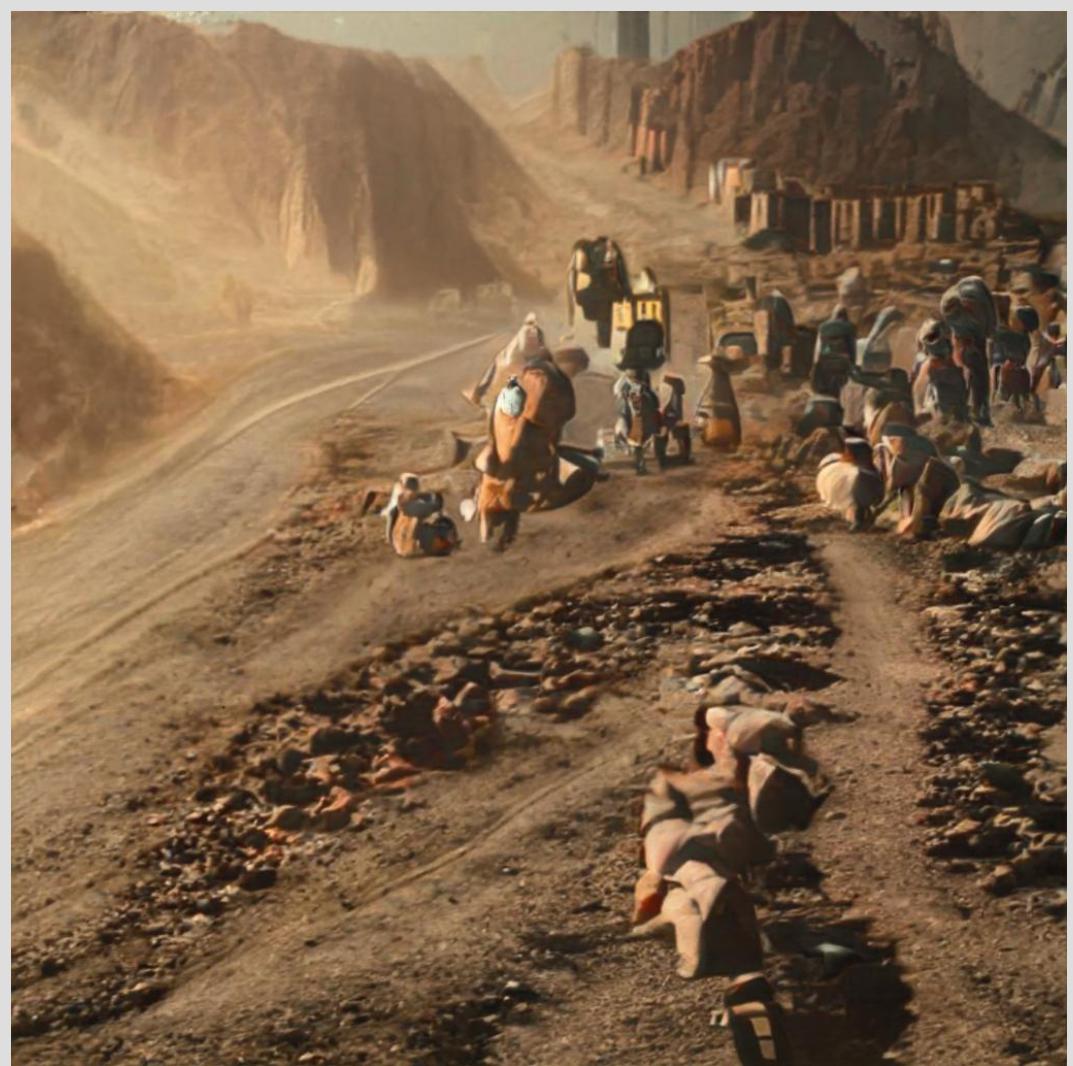


# Zora

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*“Beyond six rivers and three mountain ranges rises Zora, a city that no one, having seen it, can forget.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Despina

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*“When the camel driver sees, at the horizon of the tableland, the pinnacles of the skyscrapers come into view, the radar antennae, the white and red wind-socks flapping, the chimneys belching smoke, he thinks of a ship.”*

- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*



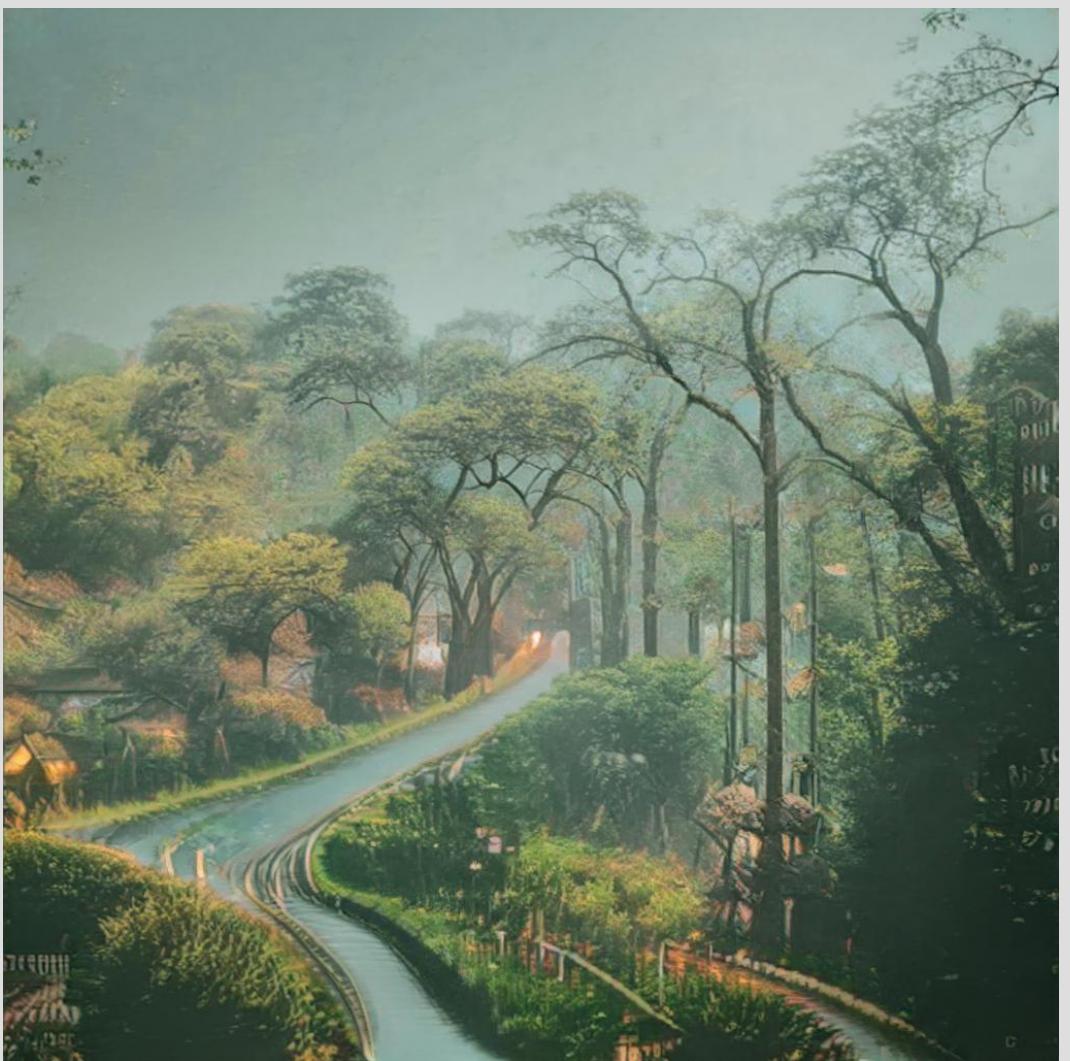
## Zirma

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*"Dirigibles flying in all directions, at window level; streets of shops where tattoos are drawn on sailors' skin; underground trains crammed with obese women suffering from the humidity."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Isaura

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*"Isaura, city of the thousand wells, is said to rise over a deep, subterranean lake. On all sides, wherever the inhabitants dig long vertical holes in the ground, they succeed in drawing up water, as far as the city extends, and no farther. Its green border repeats the dark outline of the buried lake."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



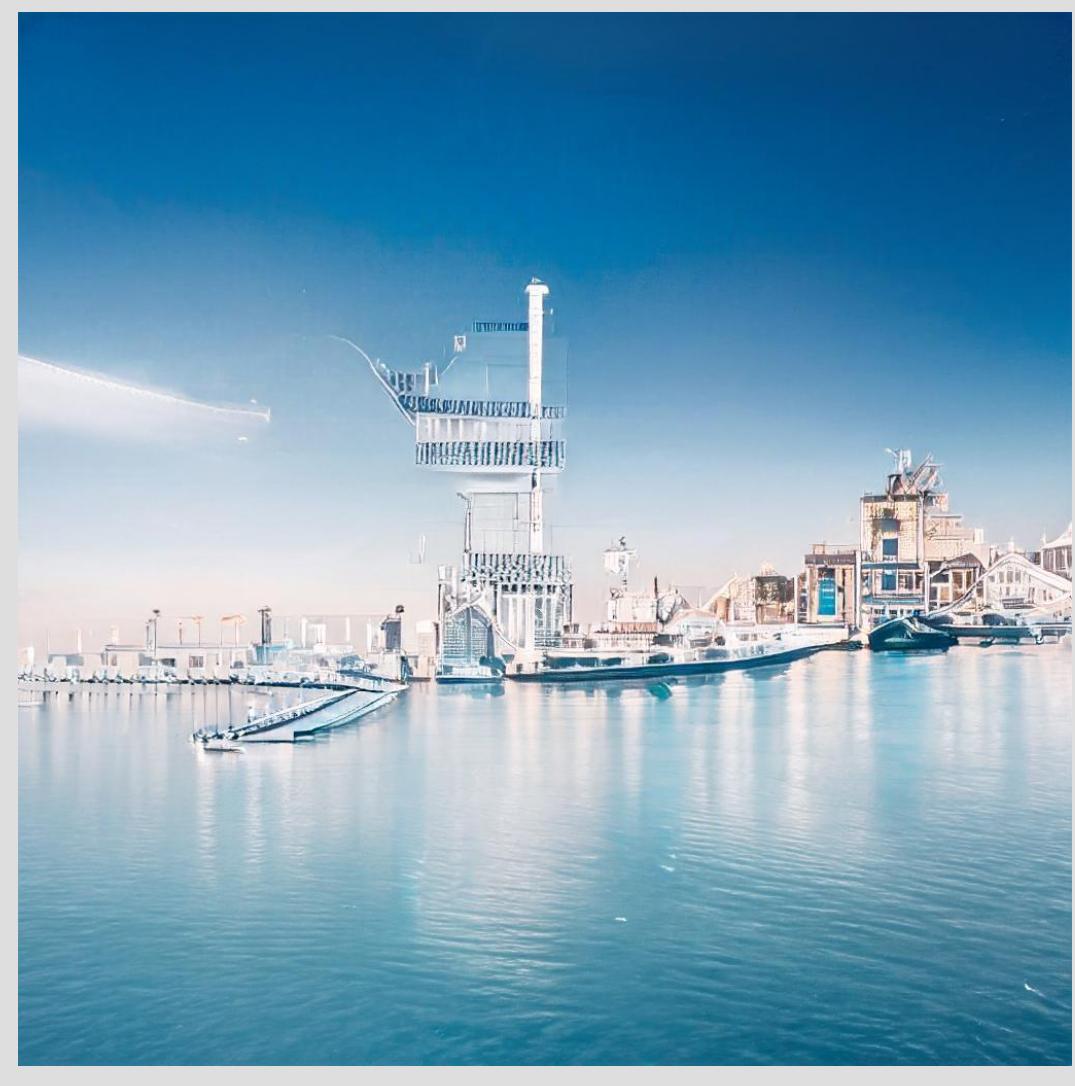
## Maurilia

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66

*"The same identical square with a hen in the place of the bus station, a bandstand in the place of the overpass, two young ladies with white parasols in the place of the munitions factory."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



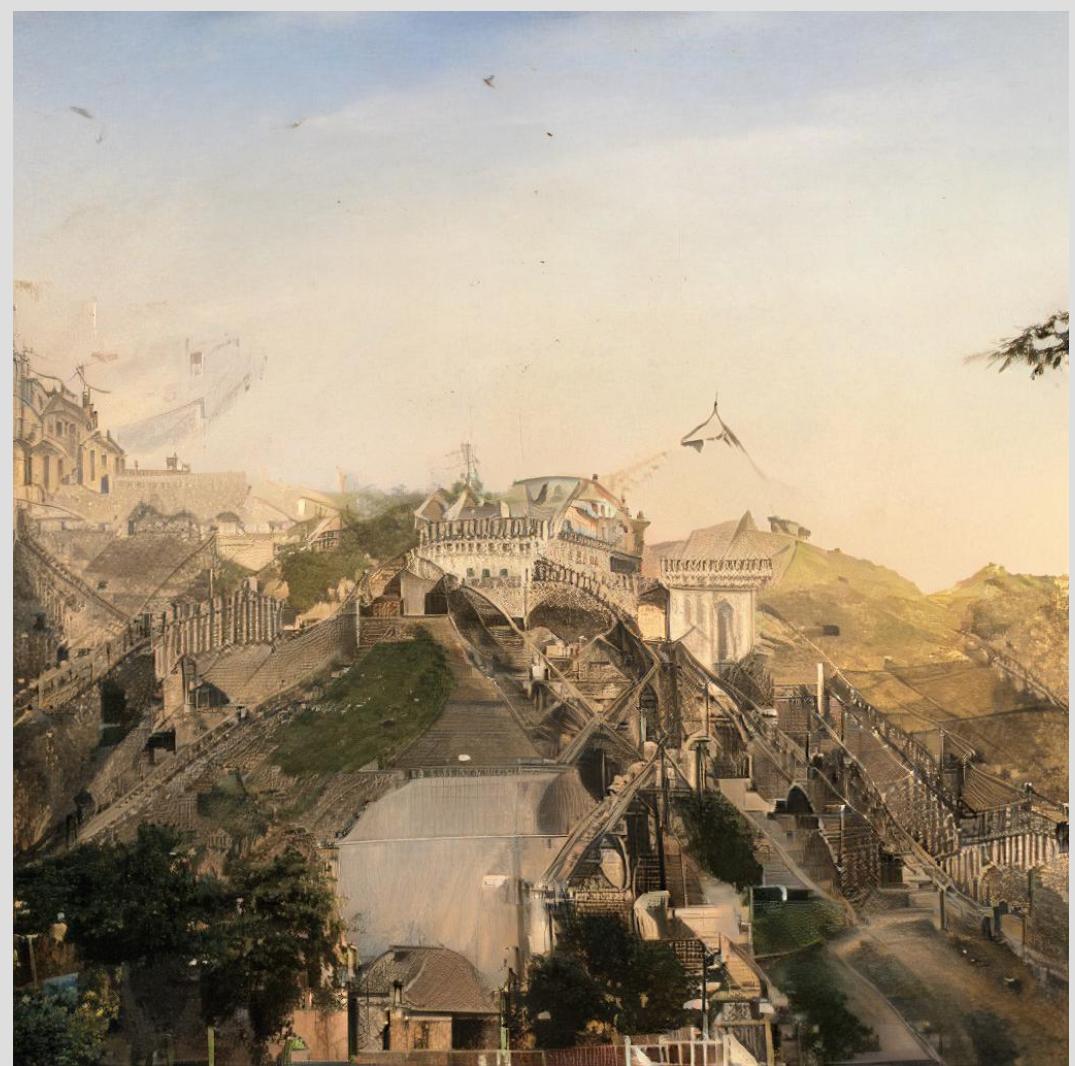
# Fedora

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*"In the center of Fedora, that gray stone metropolis, stands a metal building with a crystal globe in every room. Looking into each globe, you see a blue city, the model of a different Fedora."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Zoe

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*"In every point of this city you can, in turn, sleep, make tools, cook, accumulate gold, disrobe, reign, sell, question oracles. Any one of its pyramid roofs could cover the leprosarium or the odalisques' baths. The traveler roams all around and has nothing but doubts."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Zenobia

66

*“Set on dry terrain it stands on high pilings, and the houses are of bamboo and zinc, with many platforms and balconies placed on stilts at various heights, crossing one another, linked by ladders and hanging sidewalks.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Euphemia

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*“Proceeding eighty miles into the northwest wind, you reach the city of Euphemia, where the merchants of seven nations gather at every solstice and equinox.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



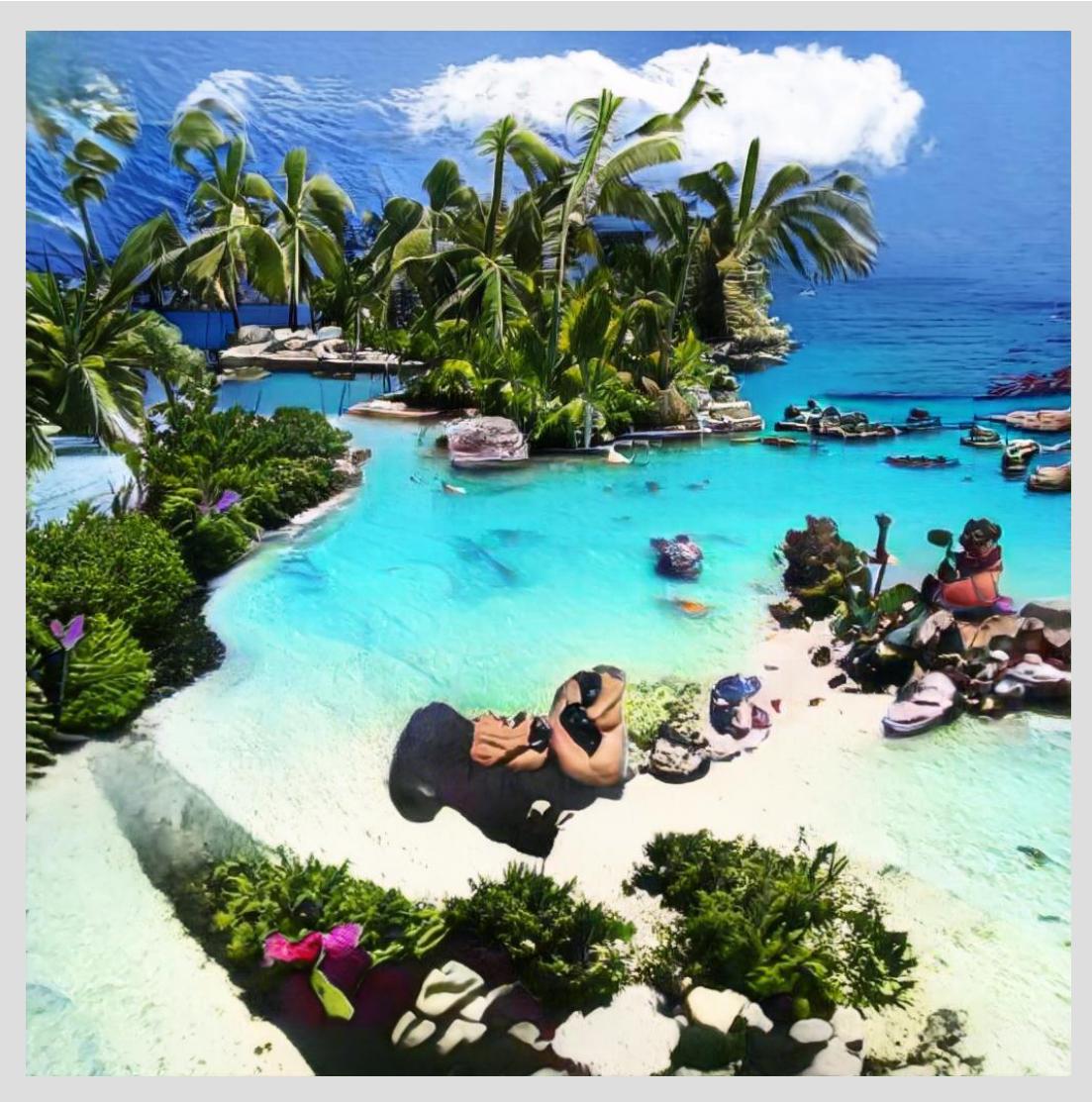
## Zobeide

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☶

*“The white city, well exposed to the moon, with streets wound about themselves as in a skein.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Hypatia

66

*"A magnolia garden was reflected in blue lagoons, I walked among the hedges, sure I would discover young and beautiful ladies bathing; but at the bottom of the water, crabs were biting the eyes of the suicides, stones tied around their necks, their hair green with seaweed."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Armilla

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66

*"No walls, no ceilings, no floors: it has nothing that makes it seem a city, except the water pipes that rise vertically where the houses should be and spread out horizontally where the floors should be: a forest of pipes that end in taps, showers, spouts, overflows."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Chloe

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66

*"In Chloe, a great city, the people who move through the streets are all strangers. At each encounter, they imagine a thousand things about one another; meetings which could take place between them, conversations, surprises, caresses, bites. But no one greets anyone; eyes lock for a second, then dart away, seeking other eyes, never stopping."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Valdrada

66

*"The ancients built Valdrada on the shores of a lake, with houses all verandas one above the other, and high streets whose railed parapets look out over the water."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Olivia

66

*“A city rich in products and in profits, I can indicate its prosperity only by speaking of filigree palaces with fringed cushions on the seats by the mullioned windows. Beyond the screen of a patio, spinning jets water a lawn where a white peacock spreads its tail.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Sophronia

66

*"The city of Sophronia is made up of two half-cities. In one there is the great roller coaster with its steep humps, the carousel with its chain spokes, the Ferris wheel of spinning cages... The other half-city is of stone and marble and cement."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

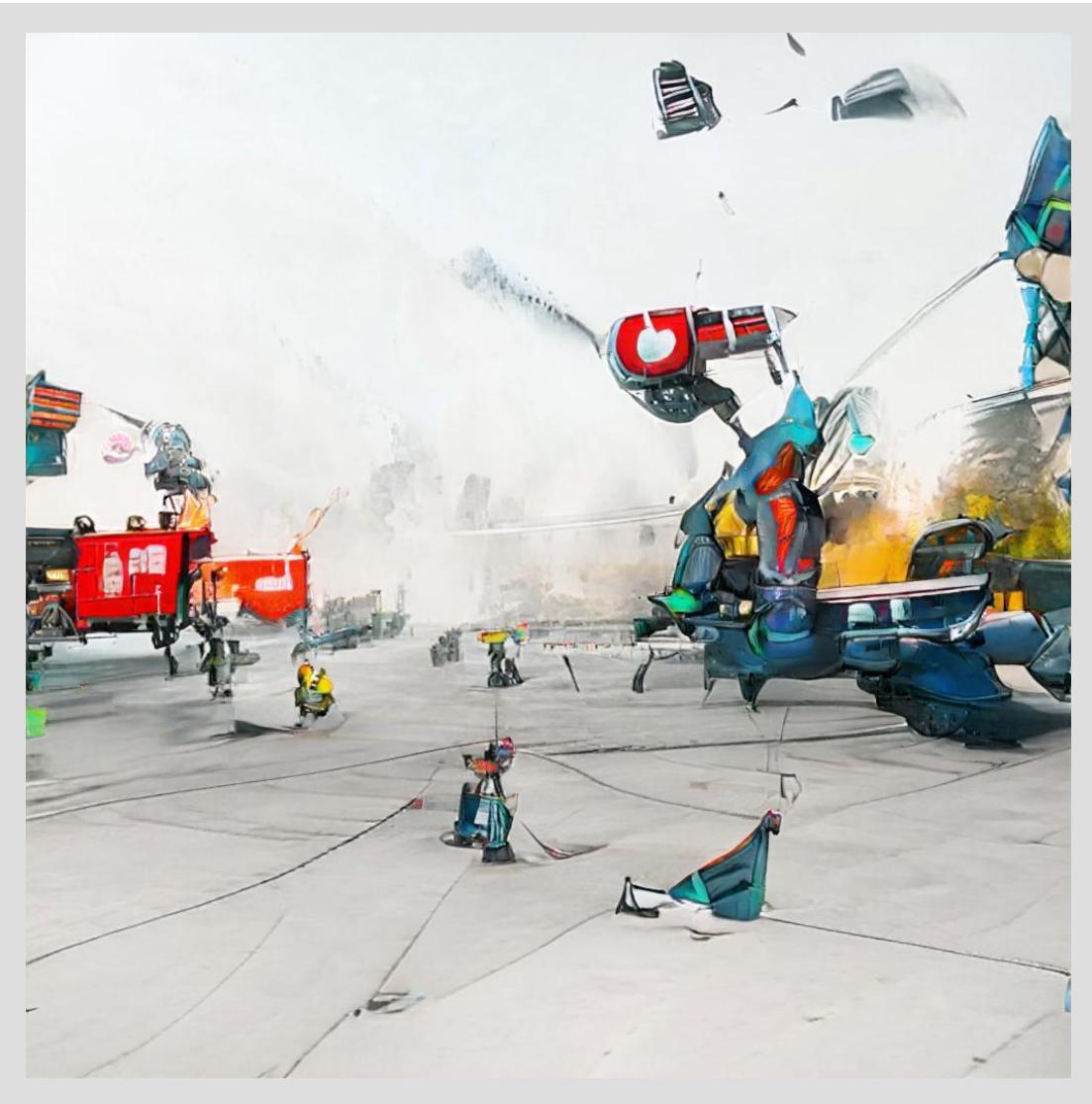


# Eutropia

66

*"When he enters the territory of which Eutropia is the capital, the traveler sees not one city but many, of equal size and not unlike one another, scattered over a vast, rolling plateau."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Zemrude

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66

*"If you go by whistling...you will know it from below: window sills, flapping curtains, fountains. If you walk along hanging your head, your nails dug into the palms of your hands, your gaze will be held on the ground, in the gutters, the manhole covers, the fish scales, wastepaper."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Aglaura

66

*"It is a colorless city, without character, planted there at random. But this would not be true, either: at certain hours, in certain places along the street, you see opening before you the hint of something unmistakable, rare, perhaps magnificent."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Octavia

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*“There is a precipice between two steep mountains: the city is over the void, bound to the two crests with ropes and chains and catwalks.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Ersilia

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66

*"The inhabitants stretch strings from the corners of the houses, white or black or gray or black-and-white... When the strings become so numerous that you can no longer pass among them, the inhabitants leave: the houses are dismantled; only the strings and their supports remain."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Baucis

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*“Nothing of the city touches the earth except those long flamingo legs on which it rests and, when the days are sunny, a pierced, angular shadow that falls on the foliage.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Leandra

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*“Gods of two species protect the city of Leandra. Both are too tiny to be seen and too numerous to be counted.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Melania

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66

*“Every time you enter the square, you find yourself caught in a dialogue: the braggart soldier and the parasite coming from a door meet the young wastrel and the prostitute; or else the miserly father from his threshold utters his final warnings.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



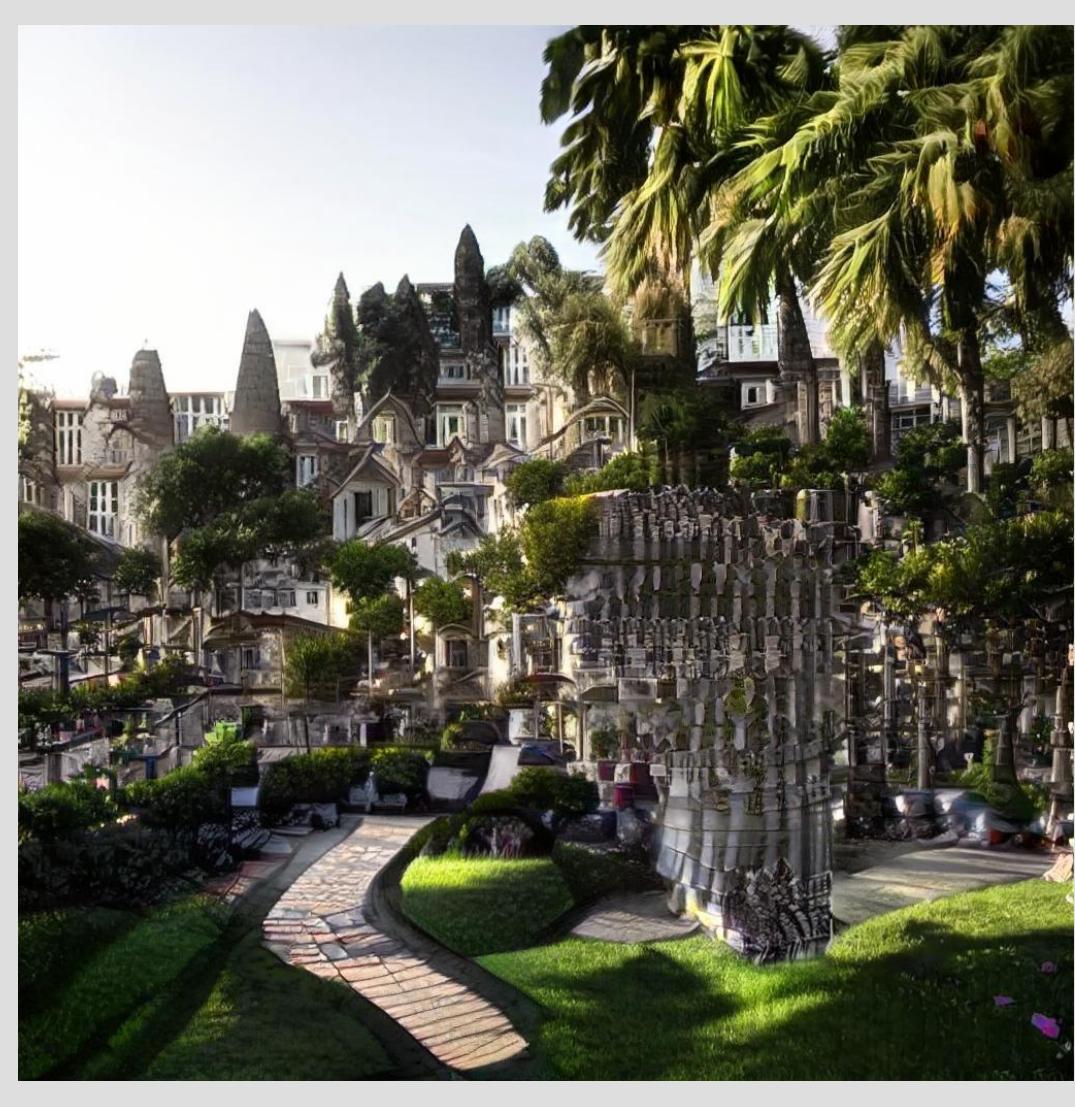
## Esmeralda

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66

*"In Esmeralda, city of water, a network of canals and a network of streets span and intersect each other. To go from one place to another you have always the choice between land and boat."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Phyllis

¶¶

*“At every point the city offers surprises to your view: a caper bush jutting from the fortress' walls, the statues of three queens on corbels, an onion dome with three smaller onions threaded on the spire.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Pyrrha

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¶¶

*“A fortified city on the slopes of a bay, with high windows and towers, enclosed like a goblet, with a central square deep as a well, with a well in its center.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Adelma

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*“Perhaps Adelma is the city where you arrive dying and where each finds again the people he has known. This means I, too, am dead.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Eudoxia

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*"In Eudoxia, which spreads both upward and down, with winding alleys, steps, dead ends, hovels, a carpet is preserved in which you can observe the city's true form."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Morianा

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*“When you have forded the river, when you have crossed the mountain pass, you suddenly find before you the city of Moriana, its alabaster gates transparent in the sunlight, its coral columns supporting pediments encrusted with serpentine, its villas all of glass like aquariums where the shadows of dancing girls with silvery scales swim beneath the medusa-shaped chandeliers.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



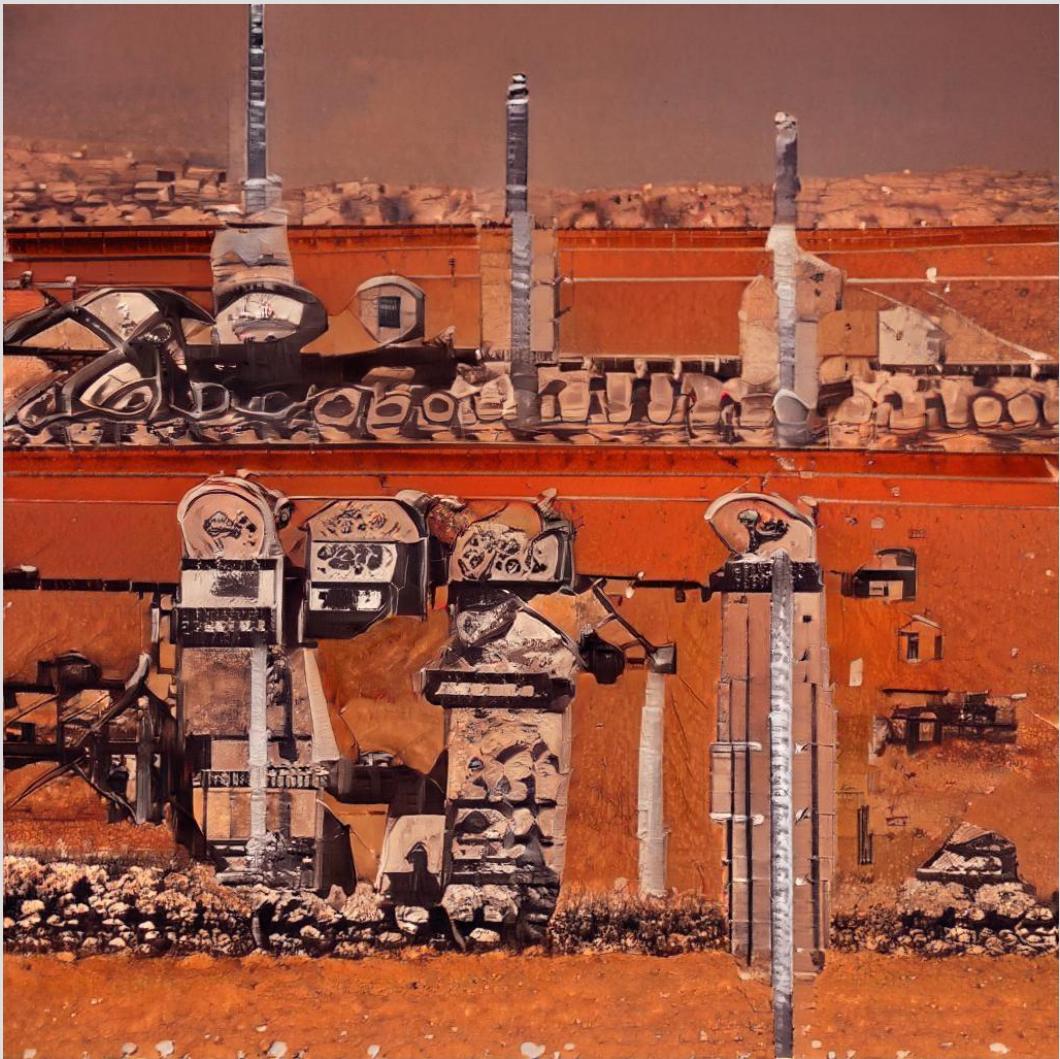
## Clarice

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66

*"Clarice, the glorious city, has a tormented history. Several times it decayed, then burgeoned again, always keeping the first Clarice as an unparalleled model of every splendor, compared to which the city's present state can only cause more sighs at every fading of the stars."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Eusapia

66

*"The inhabitants have constructed an identical copy of their city, underground. All corpses, dried in such a way that the skeleton remains sheathed in yellow skin, are carried down there, to continue their former activities."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Beersheba

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*“The image propagated by tradition is that of a city of pure gold, with silver locks and diamond gates, a jewel-city, all inset and inlaid, as a maximum of laborious study might produce when applied to materials of the maximum worth.”*

- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*



## Leonia

66

*“Leonia's rubbish little by little would invade the world, if, from beyond the final crest of its boundless rubbish heap, the street cleaners of other cities were not pressing, also pushing mountains of refuse in front of themselves.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



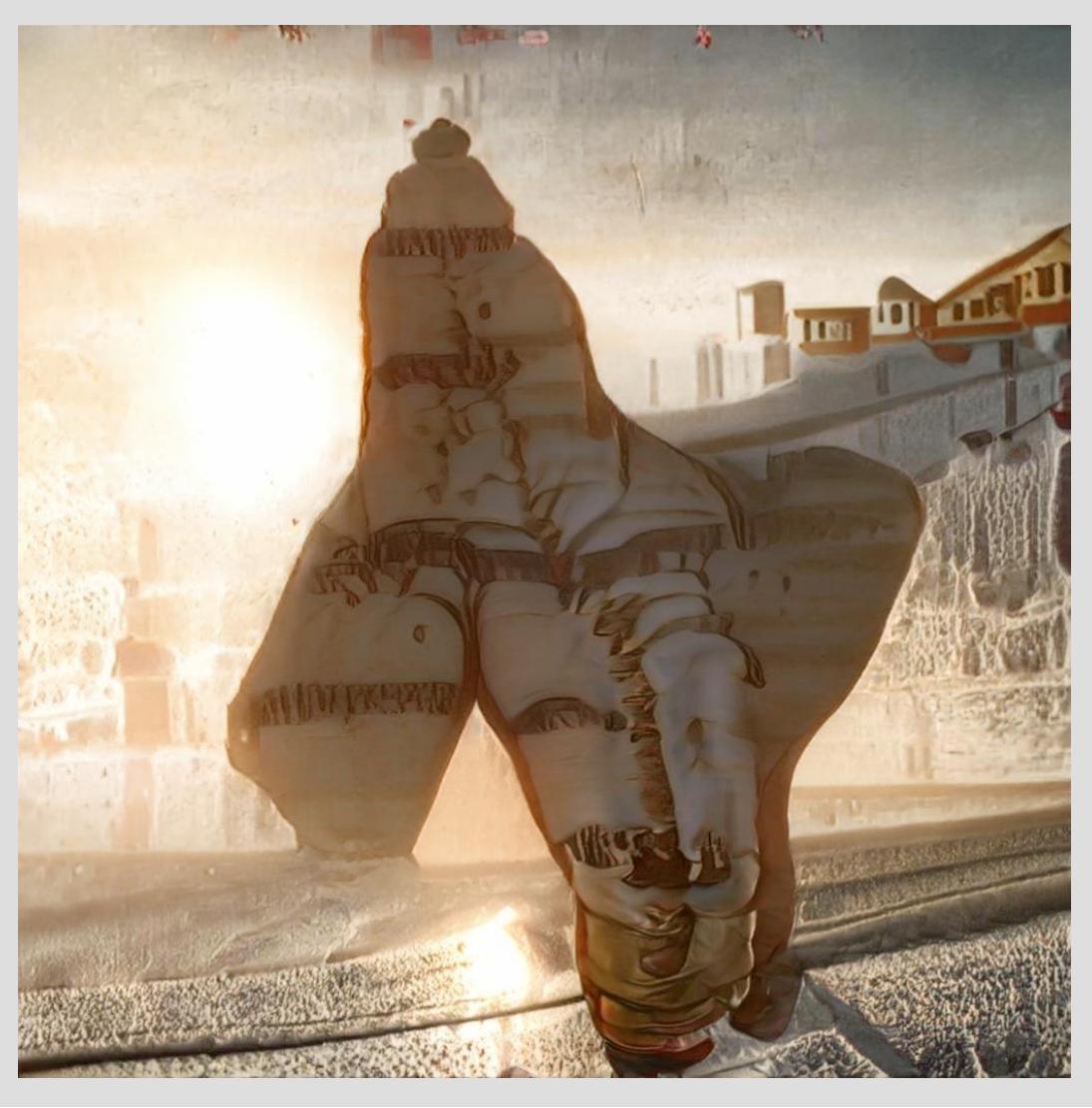
## Irene

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66

*"Irene is the city visible when you lean out from the edge of the plateau at the hour when the lights come on, and in the limpid air, the pink of the settlement can be discerned spread out in the distance below."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

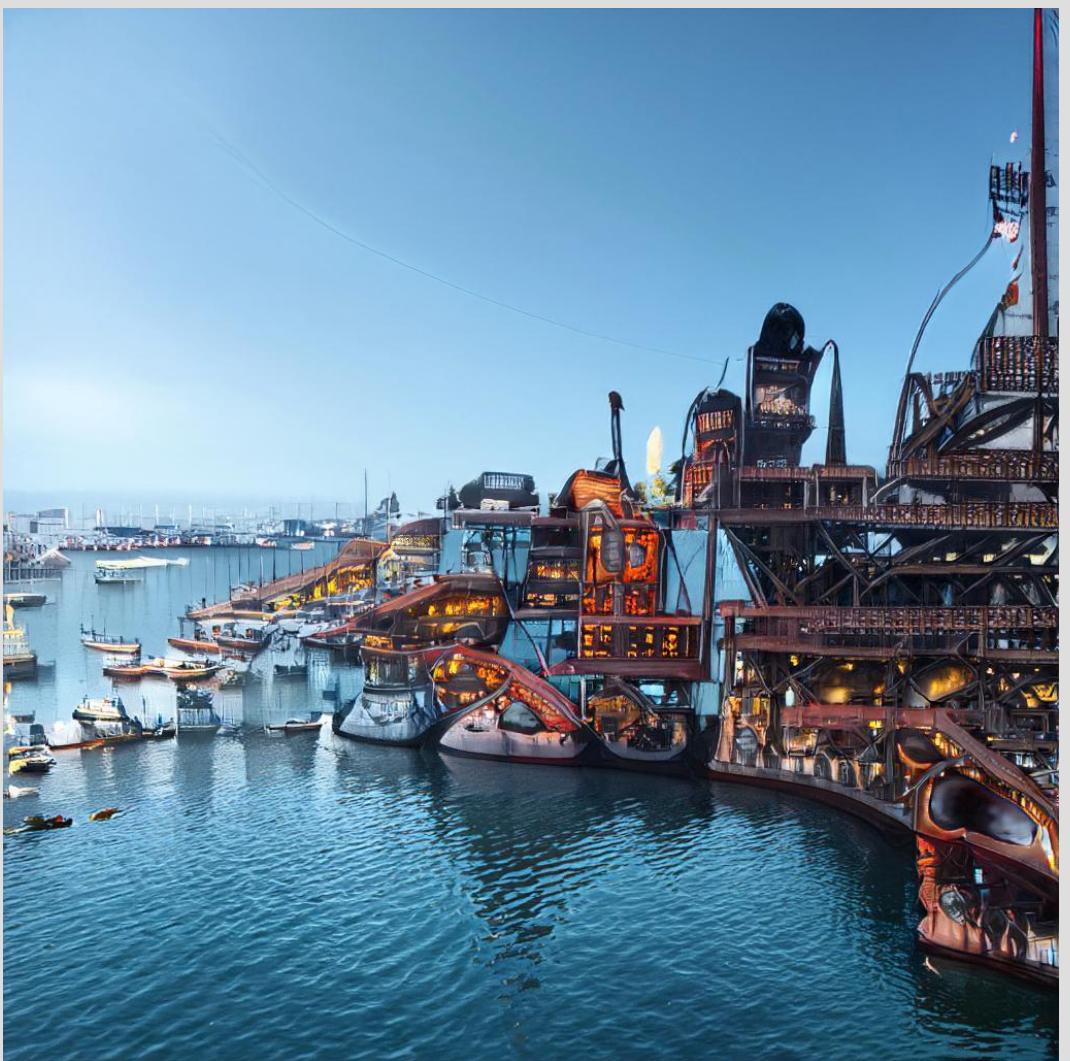


## Argia

66

*"The streets are completely filled with dirt, clay packs the rooms to the ceiling, on every stair another stairway is set in negative, over the roofs of the houses hang layers of rocky terrain like skies with cloud."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Thekla

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66

*“Those who arrive at Thekla can see little of the city, beyond the plank fences, the sackcloth screens, the scaffoldings, the metal armatures, the wooden catwalks hanging from ropes or supported by sawhorses, the ladders, the trestles.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Trude

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66

*"The suburbs they drove me through were no different from the others, with the same little greenish and yellowish houses. Following the same signs we swung around the same flower beds in the same squares."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Olinda

66

*“Olinda is certainly not the only city that grows in concentric circles, like tree trunks which each year add one more ring.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

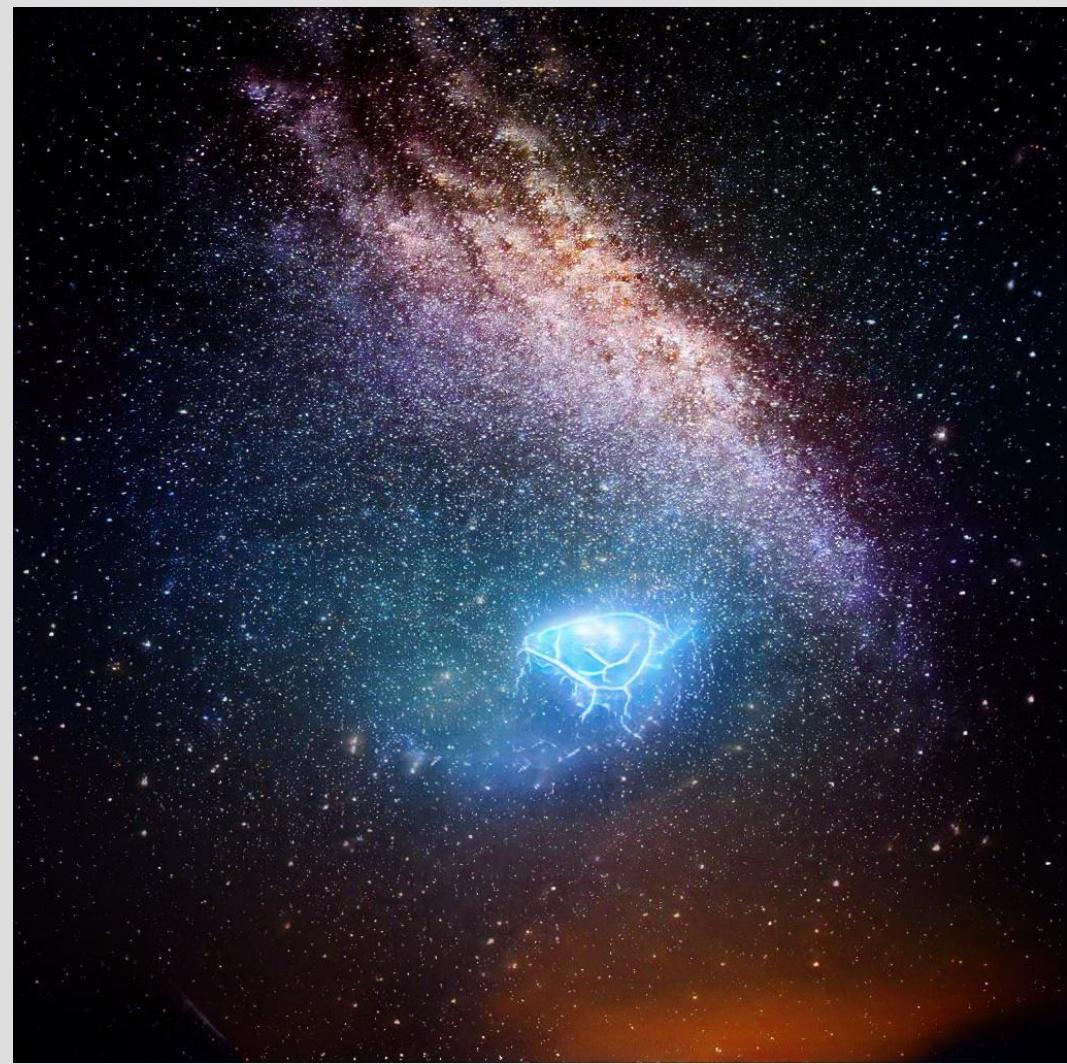


## Laudomia

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*“Laudomia assigns an equally vast residence to those who are still to be born. Naturally the space is not in proportion to their number, which is presumably infinite, but since the area is empty, surrounded by an architecture all niches and bays and grooves.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Perinthia

¶¶

*“They divided the map according to the twelve houses of the zodiac so that each temple and each neighborhood would receive the proper influence of the favoring constellations.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Procopia

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¶¶

*"A ditch, a bridge, a little wall, a medlar, a field of corn, a bramble patch' with blackberries, a chicken yard, the yellow hump of a hill, a white cloud, a stretch of blue sky shaped like a trapeze."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Raissa

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66

*“People wring their hands as they walk in the streets, curse the crying children, lean on the railings over the river and press their fists to their temples.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Andria

¶¶

*“Andria was built so artfully that its every street follows a planet's orbit, and the buildings and the places of community life repeat the order of the constellations and the position of the most luminous stars.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



## Cecilia

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66

*"In the streets of Cecilia, an illustrious city, I met once a goatherd, driving a tinkling flock along the walls."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

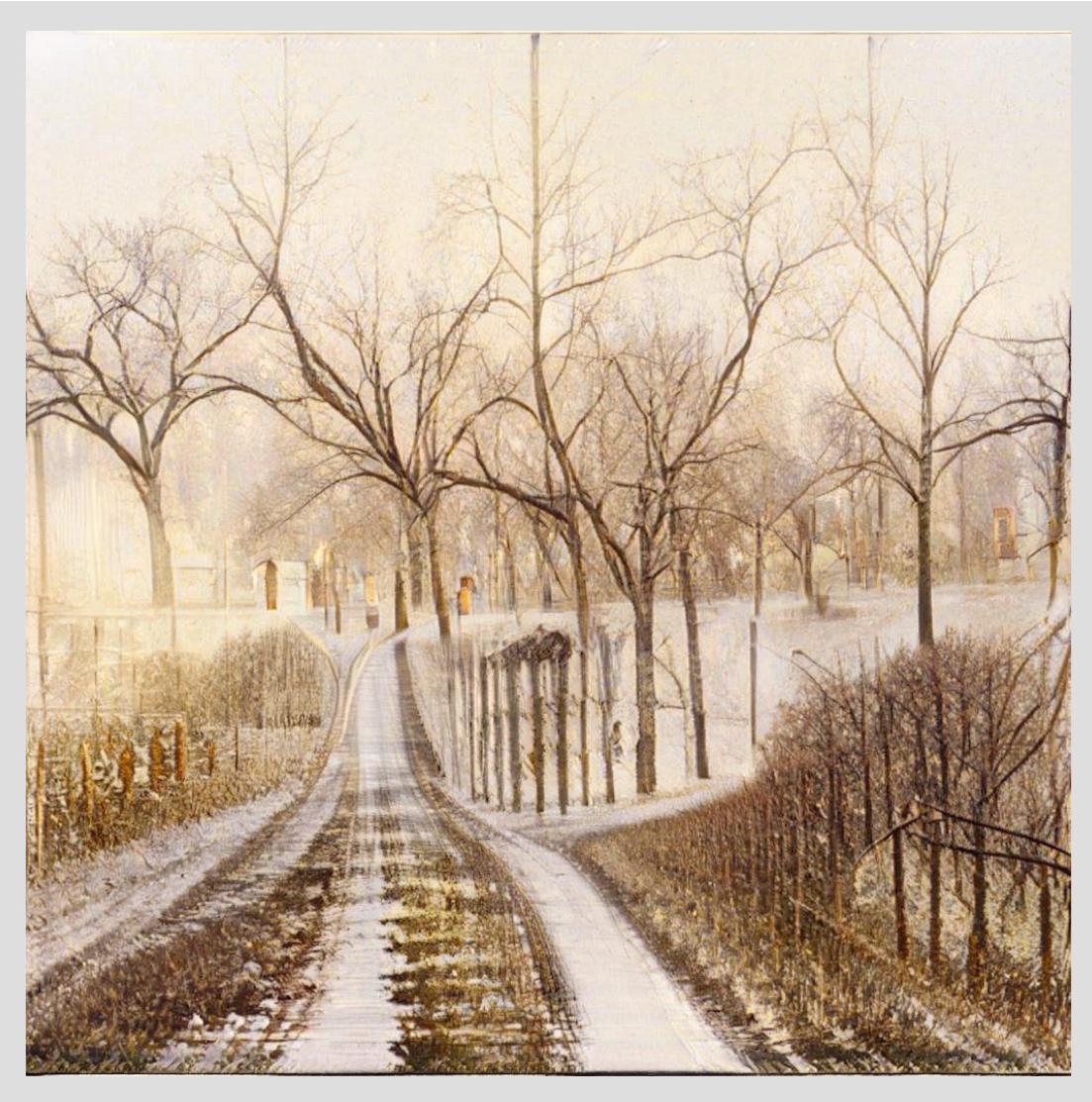


## Marozia

66

*"Marozia is a city where all run through leaden passages like packs of rats who tear from one another's teeth the leftovers which fall from the teeth of the most voracious one."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

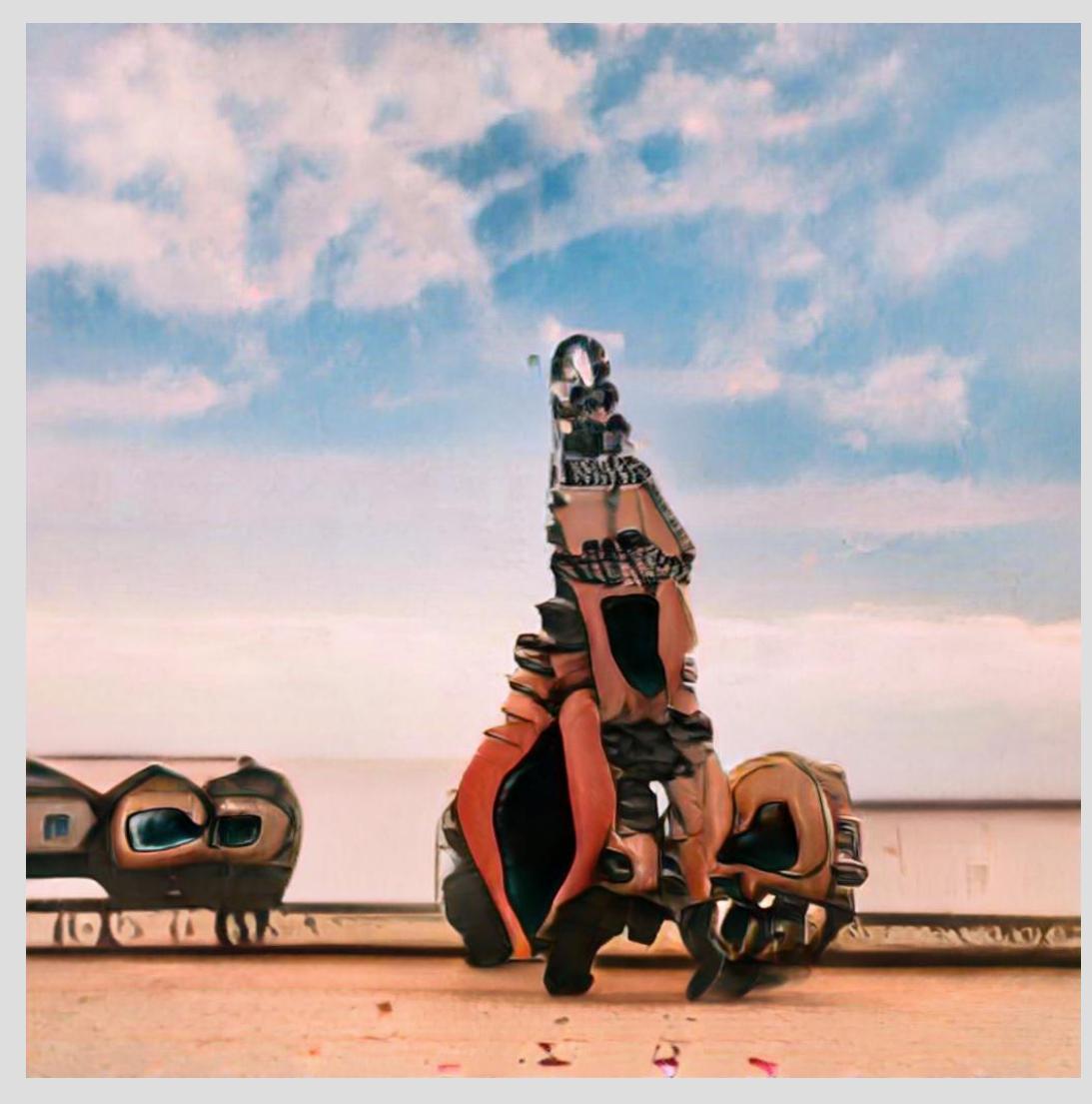


# Penthesilea

66

*"Penthesilea spreads for miles around, a soupy city diluted in the plain; pale buildings back to back in mangy fields, among plank fences and corrugated-iron sheds."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

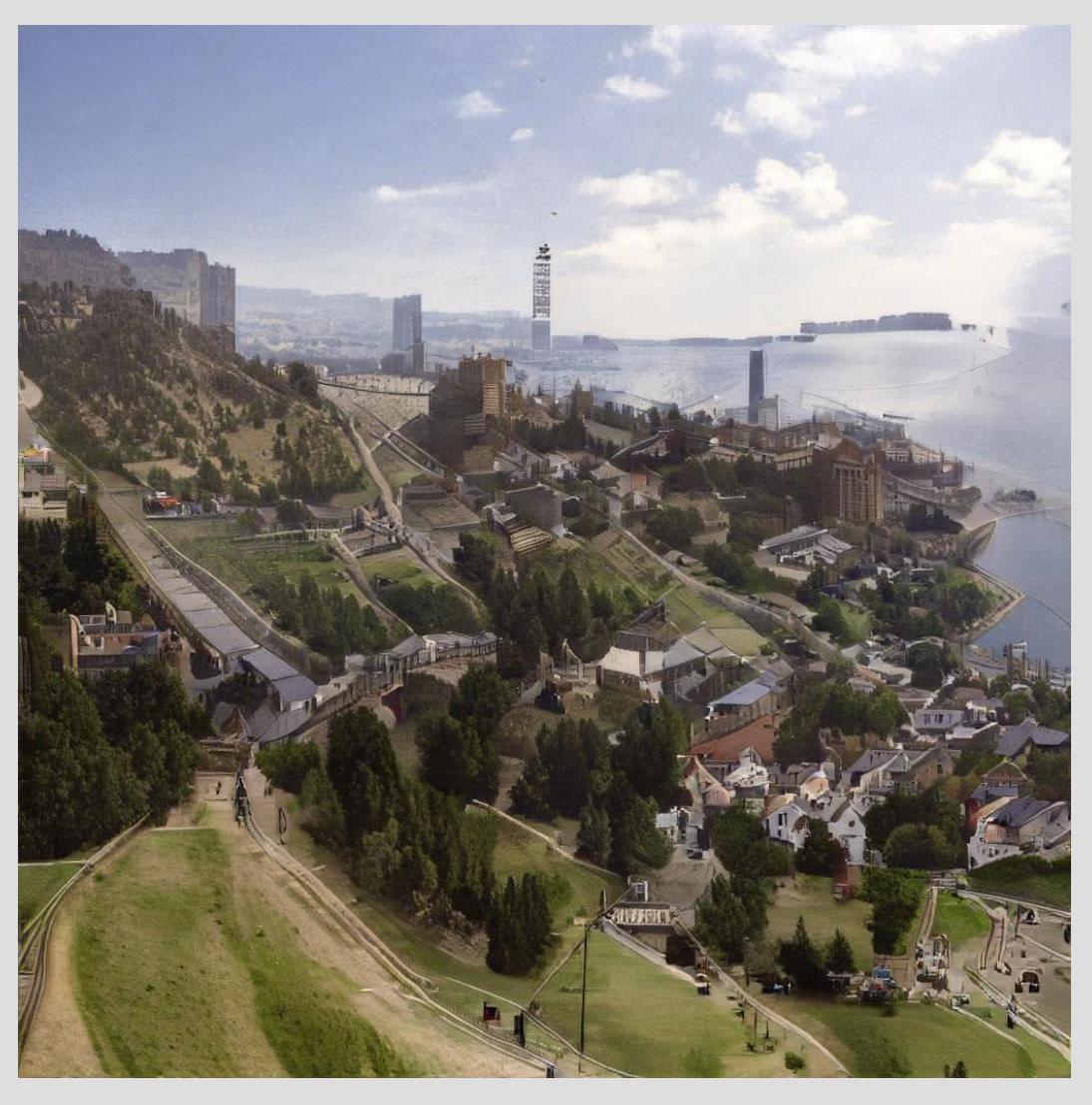


## Theodora

66

*"The city, great cemetery of the animal kingdom, was closed, aseptic, over the final buried corpses with their last fleas and their last germs."*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities



# Berenice

66

*“Berenice, the unjust city, which crowns with triglyphs, abaci, metopes the gears of its meat-grinding machines.”*

- Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities