

TRANSCRIPT  
**ONOMATOPEIA**

**EP 1 – Caffè Reggìo: scenes from a classic coffee shop**

*Subway and street sound*

**MARTA CAMPABADAL:** I catch the subway in Morningside Heights, right at the Columbia University stop. It's Monday, 10 AM. I spend most of my week time here, so moving on a Monday morning feels weird. Line 1 takes me all the way down to Greenwich Village. I hop off at the Christopher Street station. I walk the few blocks that separate the station from my destination. It's a sunny morning and the weather, around 60 degrees, is nice for November.

*Street sound*

**MC:** The people and the streets still look like they are recovering from the night before. Except for the fruit vendor on the corner of Carmine and Bleecker St.

He is ready for the week. His peaches, bananas, and strawberries are neatly set up.

This is a neighborhood made famous by places like the Blue Note Jazz Club,

Dizzy Gillespie played there...

*Dizzy Gillespie music*

**MC:** So did Sarah Vaughan...

*Sara Vaughan music*

**MC:** And then there's Caffè Reggìo. The reason I'm here.

*Sounds from inside the caffè*

**MC:** I am from Barcelona, a city where historical coffee houses are sadly disappearing. Being able to sit in one is a pleasure to me. It brings me closer to home.

When I'm alone - I usually get my coffee to go. But today, I've decided to stay.

**Theme music**

I'm Marta Campabadal Graus and this is Onomatopoeia- a podcast about the places and people of New York City. In this episode, scenes from a classic coffee shop.

**Classical music on the *caffè***

**MC:**

Caffè Reggio is one of the oldest cafés in the city. It opened nearly 100 years ago on MacDougal Street.

Between West 3rd and Minetta Lane.

And it looks as if nothing has changed over the years. It's museum-like.

The furniture has that smell of old wood.

The walls are cluttered. There is an Italian painting from the school of Caravaggio. It has a dramatic contrast of light and darkness.

On the lower level, there is a bench that belonged to the Medici family, the Italian banking and political dynasty.

The walls, the window frames, the terrace, they're all painted an intense shade of green - the color of grass on a spring day.

They say this is the first cafe to serve cappuccinos in the States. And I decide to order, of course, a cappuccino. So far, I have not found good coffee in New York. But this one is different. I am not disappointed, it tastes just like home. [*Coffe machine*]

I'm not the only one sitting alone.

There's a young woman in her late twenties working on her laptop.

An older woman in her fifties, with short hair and wearing a beret. She looks at her phone and laughs.

**Conversation rolling into**

**MC:**

A couple in their thirties seem to be on their first date. He has curly hair and a new tattoo. I see that because of the plastic wrapping on his arm. In the beginning,

they are making small talk. At some point, the conversation intensifies. She explains that she was once engaged but backed out right before the wedding. They laugh a lot. I think there will be a second date.

In the center of the interior, there is a table with a sign that says "Reserved." I see an old Italian-looking man with a Caffè Reggio mask sitting at that table.

### ***Fabrizio speaking***

**MC:** He is the owner and he likes sitting there. His name is Fabrizio Cavallacci and he has owned the place since he was 16 years old. He tells me he is here every day from 8 AM to 3 AM. While we are talking, Fabrizio starts painting a window frame. He likes to keep repainting the outdoor fixtures. The green paint is bright for a reason.

### ***Conversation on the caffè***

**MC:** On the terrace, a young guy works on a math assignment. A man who looks like he needs a shower and a shave is drinking water at a table.

At some point, I feel uncomfortable sitting on my own. I cannot help it and I look at my cell phone. I answer some WhatsApps, check Instagram, and go over my feed on Twitter.

I love being by myself but I feel as though I need to be "doing" something.

When I jog or go for a walk I am either listening to podcasts or calling my mom.

Here - at the coffee shop - I want to pay attention.

The sounds. The people. Their faces. Their conversations.

A little part of New York that reminds me of home.

### ***Theme music***

This episode of Onomatopoeia was created by me, Marta Campabadal Graus. Onomatopoeia is a production of the Columbia Graduate School of

Journalism. Joanne Faryon is our executive producer and professor. Original theme music by Lee Feldman. Special thanks to Columbia Digital Librarian Michelle Wilson.

***Theme music fades out***