

# Disparity (and more)

by [Myles Weber](#) (September 2022)



*Artist unknown, circa 1880-1900, France*

## Disparity

the newspaper article contains information  
more distressing  
than my mind can accept with magnanimity

fifteen recruits half my age  
from one Midwestern town  
perished fighting brush fires in Arizona

at home they'd formed a band of volunteers  
all friends

all male

but you knew that

## **Gender Studies**

dishonesty

is a distilled form  
of stupidity

by that measure

hers is the dimmest mind  
he's worked with

obesity is healthy

she tells her students  
inebriation during pregnancy  
poses no harm to the fetus  
you can treat stage four cancer  
with acupuncture

as a binary

male and female are false

because she trolls his colleagues

unchallenged  
he likewise questions  
their intelligence

and though not in his nature,

he's come to distrust the rationality  
of his own observations

I never lie

but is my knife  
the sharpest  
in the drawer

he asks alone, at night, in bed

if so

we're screwed

## When They Say Wetland

The eagle pair ride a gust of wind,  
hang motionless above the east lake.  
I saw three others early in the week.

Work colleagues I avoid like disease,  
but one approaches me  
in the parking lot,  
complaining about the new  
physical rehabilitation facility  
beside the clinic,  
between the lakes, on marshy ground,  
which the builders filled in  
before commencing work.

I do comedic double takes,  
directing my coworker's eye  
to the raptors above.  
No migratory patterns  
were disrupted by so minor  
an intrusion along the river.  
The bluffs look Grant Wood green.  
Fish stock the lakes.  
Geese halt unhurried traffic  
in the park.

Remember when environmentalists  
accused the President of spiking  
the drinking water with arsenic?  
When Greenpeace said, "Jump,"  
he refused to ask, "How high?"

Now when they say, "Wetland,"  
I hear, "Malarial swamp,"  
though I scarcely listen  
to a word they say.

## Unreasonably Cool

*Technically we are warmer than average,*  
the weatherman reports. *But still seasonably cool*  
*for this time of year.* So why the alarm?  
Or am I acting unreasonably cool  
toward tropospheric conditions?  
One skeptic rates us a tropical species.  
We have no fur, no hooves to traverse snow.  
Man has adapted, like one topical species  
in the news—a hulking white Arctic beast  
we've chosen to regard as adorable,  
though it will rip a baby seal to bitesize  
pieces, which we'd view as deplorable  
in other contexts. What we need  
are experiments, reproduced and falsifiable.  
Instead, when the scientific community  
hands us data, the unreliable  
nature disappoints.

*Recent flooding supports*  
*the current theory.*

If I prayed last night  
for the sun to rise and it rose this morning,  
does God exist? The consensus crowd can blast right  
through a lapse in logic. Either I'm  
a genius or they're peddlers of career-  
boosting tripe. More likely, unscientists  
are merely bossy. I have deemed them Meddlers of the Year.  
A conservative content provider (vile term)  
hears, *Thanks for keeping me sane.*  
Where's my mental stability savior?  
Exhausted, defeated, weeping in vain,  
I use triple rhymes or longer to lighten  
the tone, but my sanity is past the tipping point.

Mob members steer me toward an apt distraction:  
weed, not wine—I'm past the sipping point.

## **Domestic Hire**

Were I not from here  
I could sit in the auditorium  
like the Nigerian three seats over,  
his impassive face a block of granite.  
He chooses not to react  
when the provost brags about  
providing a safe learning environment  
for our undergraduates.  
He's an anthropologist  
observing the curious habits  
of the locals.

Because I am from here  
I present the contorted face  
of a patient receiving a vaccination  
against his will.  
I sigh audibly, causing heads to turn.  
I slump in my seat as if the provost,  
like a Soviet leader,  
were reaching the three-hour mark  
of a Comintern address,  
though my watch shows  
he's been reciting platitudes  
for seven minutes.

Four decades ago,  
I graduated from university  
with, at worst, minor bruises.  
What didn't kill me made me  
smarter—that was my education.  
I won't embarrass myself now attempting

to guard youths enrolled in my classes  
against harm to their appalling certainty.  
Nor is the man three seats over performing.  
An international hire,  
he need neither upbraid  
nor impersonate his colleagues.  
The envy vibes he feels come from my direction.

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Myles Weber is a professor of English at Winona State University in Minnesota. His work has appeared in the *Kenyon Review*, the *Southern Review*, the *Georgia Review*, the *Sewanee Review*, and many other journals. He is the author of *Consuming Silences: How We Read Authors Who Don't Publish* (U of Georgia Press).

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