

Home and When

by Jeffrey Burghauer (November 2017)



Moonlight, Edvard Munch, 1893

Home

The air is a dampened wing.
We're told (that our hope be checked)
Old-fashioned winter, a thing
We no longer should expect.

The suburban group home's wide,
Over-salted, over-lit
Porch where the retarded stride,

Battering with sobs the bit

Of cold blackness that a sad,
Random whim unduly signed
As the one that Mom & Dad
Would evanesce from behind.

After dawn, the sky is grey
As a hated sheriff. Weep
No more, Reader, for the stray
Feeble-minded are asleep.

When

When one's share of the pain & mangle
Of ancestral sin, the First Offence,
Is attributed to a single
Mortal's malice or incompetence—

When you find you always rather knew
Your fitness for this role is begun
In the exhausted moments after you
Have a kid, especially a son—

What burden is similar to this?—
To be, perhaps, to someone whom you love,
The Cataract, the Stalin who this
Man alone can see the horror of.

Sin's fruit, from which nobody's excused:
To accuse, and, indeed, to be accused.

Jeffrey Burghauser is an English teacher in Columbus, OH. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo, the University of Leeds, and currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have previously appeared in *Appalachian Journal* and *Lehrhaus*.

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