

# Two Sonnets

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (December 2019)



*Family Portrait II*, Florine Stettheimer, 1933

## Artifice

“Late Middle English (in the sense ‘workmanship’): from Old French, from Latin *artificium*, based on *ars*, art- ‘art’ + *facere* ‘make’.” –*Oxford English Dictionary*

**I remember Lucite** frosted pink & hung

To compose a chandelier above the tongue-

Colored corkscrew sprigs amid the ordered sweep  
Of synthetic flowers. I remember deep  
Carpet changing hue depending on the last  
Arcing course in which its fibers were caressed.

I remember when a cohort of sedate  
Local matrons, having somehow all of late  
Been divorced, incited what they thought to be  
Well, "themselves" (brash Caribbean fish set free  
*Just* too near a riptide) into a weird, tense,  
Unbecoming second adolescence.

Thermoplastic women & acrylic trees  
Are less artificial than these memories.



Carl Van Vechten, Florine Stettheimer, 1922

Out or In

**There were these** inflamed, concentric zones

Of my father's privacy, and loans

One fund of neurosis made to its

Counterparts, and neatly folded chits  
Bearing passwords, and the underscored,  
Simple malice where these things were stored.

Frantic Auntie Emma smacked her head  
On the opened freezer: spinach, bread,  
Trays of ice cubes, butter, and all else  
Tumbled forth, marauding through her false  
Poise to cause a radius, a reef  
Of conclusive, end-of-heaven grief.

You can let it out or keep it in.  
Both hurt. It's the Binary of Sin.

«[Previous Article](#) [Table of Contents](#) [Next Article](#)»

---

**Jeffrey Burghauser** is a teacher in Columbus, OH. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He 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 appeared (or are forthcoming) in *Appalachian Journal*, *Fearsome Critters*,

*Iceview*, *Lehrhaus*, and *New English Review*. Jeffrey's book-length collection, [\*Real Poems\*](#), is available on Amazon and his website is [www.jeffreyburghauser.com](http://www.jeffreyburghauser.com).

**Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)**