

# Home and When

by Jeffrey Burghauser (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.

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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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