

On William-Adolphe Bouguereau's *Dévidéuse* (1877)

by [Jeffrey Burghauser](#) (April 2021)



See the mantel's moldings, con-
Founded of the edge they had
By the friction of those un-
Numbered girls so keen to pad
Past it to the daylight-mad,
Stucco'd alcove. Here's a spun
Spinner's weasel. Here's a sad
Flower of vermillion,

Once a Perfect Future's ore,
Relegated to a Thing
Near her naked feet, this sore-
Paradox-remembering
Woman sweatless as a wing,
White as an abandoned shore,
Fondling a burl of string
Soft & white as doubtful lore.

Some tableaux can circumvent
The essential hunger one
Brings to them: for logic pent
Underneath, within, upon
What the artist's mind has grown.
See the canvas. This unrent
Beauty's an adynaton
Conjured for an argument.

To what end? Explain to me.
Let this painted image flex
Just as much reality
As a breeze that stops the clocks,
As some songs that bridge the Styx,

As souls that displace the sea.
Only that which cannot exist
exists eternally.

[Table of Contents](#)

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 collections are available on [Amazon](#), and his website is