

# Two Poems

By Jeffrey Burghauer (May 2018)



*Studies of a Dead Bird*, John Singer Sargent, 1878

## Little Birdie

**T**he predawn's first songbird (I hear you from

My tent), undertaken with that bored,  
Nearly sulky dispassion of some  
Normal bystander abruptly chore'd

With the performance of some routine  
Public service you're not sure you are  
Awfully gratified to be seen  
Confessing is within your repertoire.

I wonder if it depresses you all  
The more, indeed, to be reminded  
How *easily* one can provoke this wall  
Of idiot peers to sing, blinded

By everything they might have symbolized—  
Or, if not, by whom are you despised?

Or In The Mind

I n an oath's silhouette, birds are still.

Rifles quote the voice that made the Earth.

Heat ascends, flawless as exile,

In the rain-swept courtyards of my breath.

Fraying ledgers score those vaults where death

Is stored in dusk-beveled ingots we

Shiver to observe disbursed with

Totalitarian probity.

The darkness makes itself polemic.

Valley-blasts must be abrupt as salt.

Humiliations are dynamic.

Sten-gun sounds comprise a Gothic vault.

This sort of emergency you'll find

Only at a war—or in the mind.

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Jeffrey Burghauer 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 (or are forthcoming) in *Appalachian Journal*, *Lehrhaus*, *New English Review*, and *Iceview* (Iceland).

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