

Two Poems

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (June 2021)



Milky Way, Peter Doig, 1989-90

A Suburban *Ars Poetica*

Amid the Medieval college bells,
The half-defrosted breeze supplying smells
Of warm baguettes & freshly-showered girls,
The poems neatly thicken, cultured pearls,
Their genesis excited by the in-
Troduction of a tiny, doctrine-
Specific, stinging, rigorously meant,
Precisely-calibrated irritant

Directly into the elastic, bright,
Obscenely circumscribed asylum site.

But *I* am in Ohio, and the year
Is twenty-twenty-one; the clouds appear
As spiteful as an adolescent boy
Who's horrified of dancing. Any loy-
Alty to Heaven is a loyalty
Directed to a Somewhere I, or we,
Assemble from assorted parts. Amen.
You'll know your heaven's reasonable when
It can, upon the action of a prong,
Be irritated into yielding song.

Couplets

When all the fathers that you died to please
Are dead, the unread books will cease to tease.

*

Listen, child: never play the fool—
When we don't adore, we flay the fool.

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Jeffrey Burghauer 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