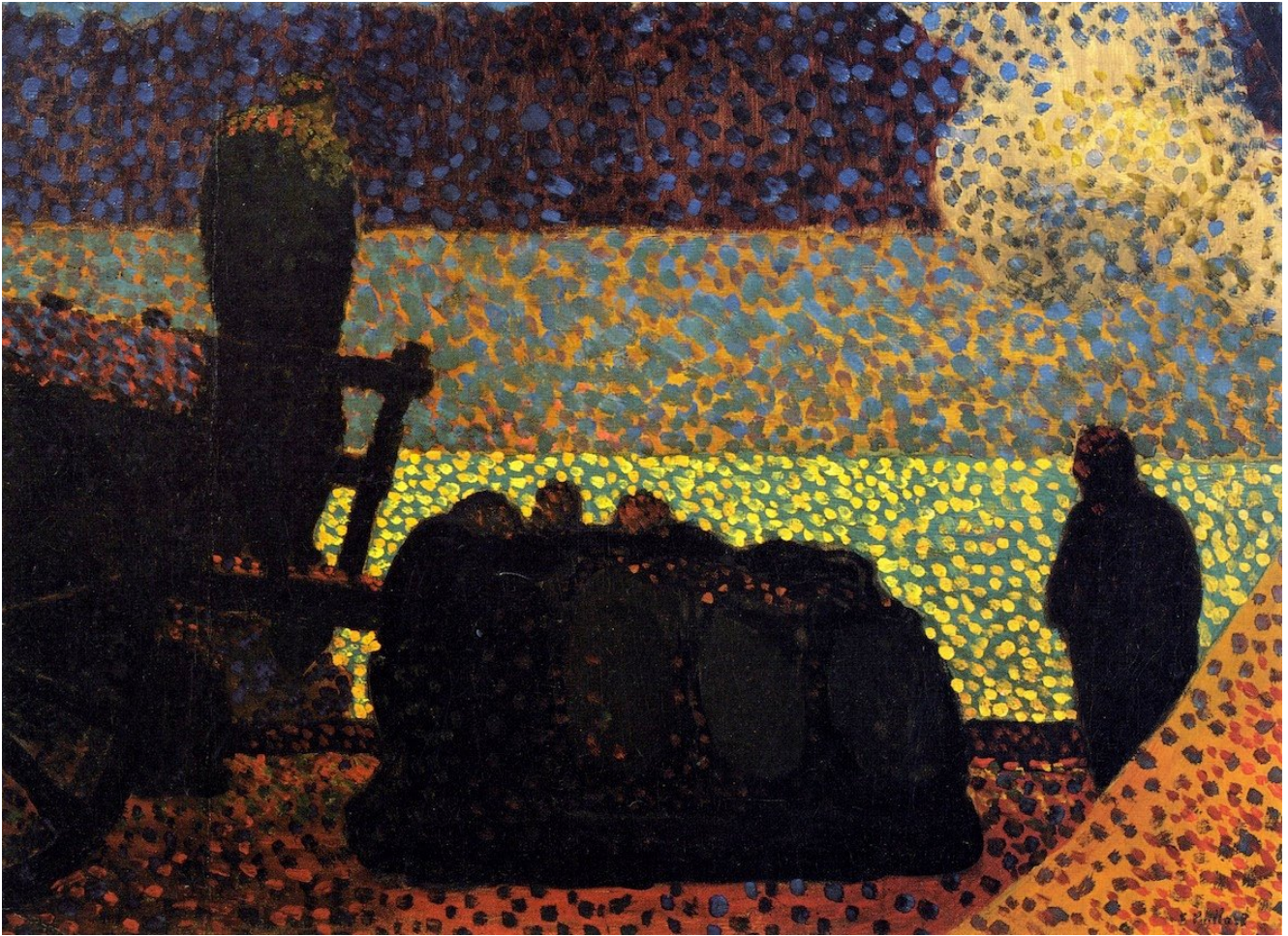


# Two Poems

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



*The Stevedores*, Edouard Vuillard, 1890

## Silence

*Negev Desert, Israel, 2003*

I remember grey fedoras, cloth  
Handkerchiefs, and beveled pinky rings;  
I remember faces freshened with  
Chilly cedar of the *macher* kings.

“On-The-Flame” was a falafel joint  
Owned by that repellent Russian who

(We would learn) had managed to appoint  
Cellar space for storing nearly two  
Dozen fettered Slavic women at  
Any given time, awaiting their  
Transport by the Bedouins, who (fat  
With the dark & sumptuary air)  
Suture trails through iridescent sand,  
Under stars, diversely acaroid,  
To the barbed Egyptian border, and  
Thence straightforwardly into the Void.

I remark on how the stevedore  
Loads, unloads the merchandise. You see,  
There are types of silence that the poor  
Can't afford, and others—that are free.

### Hangman's Reel

After "Hangman's Reel" is done,  
Banjos, mandolins, guitars,  
Rustic violins & bass  
Are relaxed; their sweaty, tanned  
Players, moments afterwards.

Instruments, like firearms,  
Make, when handled idly,  
Liquidly arrested sounds  
Intermixed with circumscribed,  
Vaguely-muffled clattering.

After gulping from a jar  
Handed to him from the right,  
Gideon, already soused,  
Shakes his jowls in feigned disgust  
As his wife inclines her eyes

Heavenward in some burlesque,  
Over-acted plea for help.  
Tune the banjos down to D.

God has lips, and they can kiss.  
This is Heaven; Heaven, this.

## [Table of Contents](#)

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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