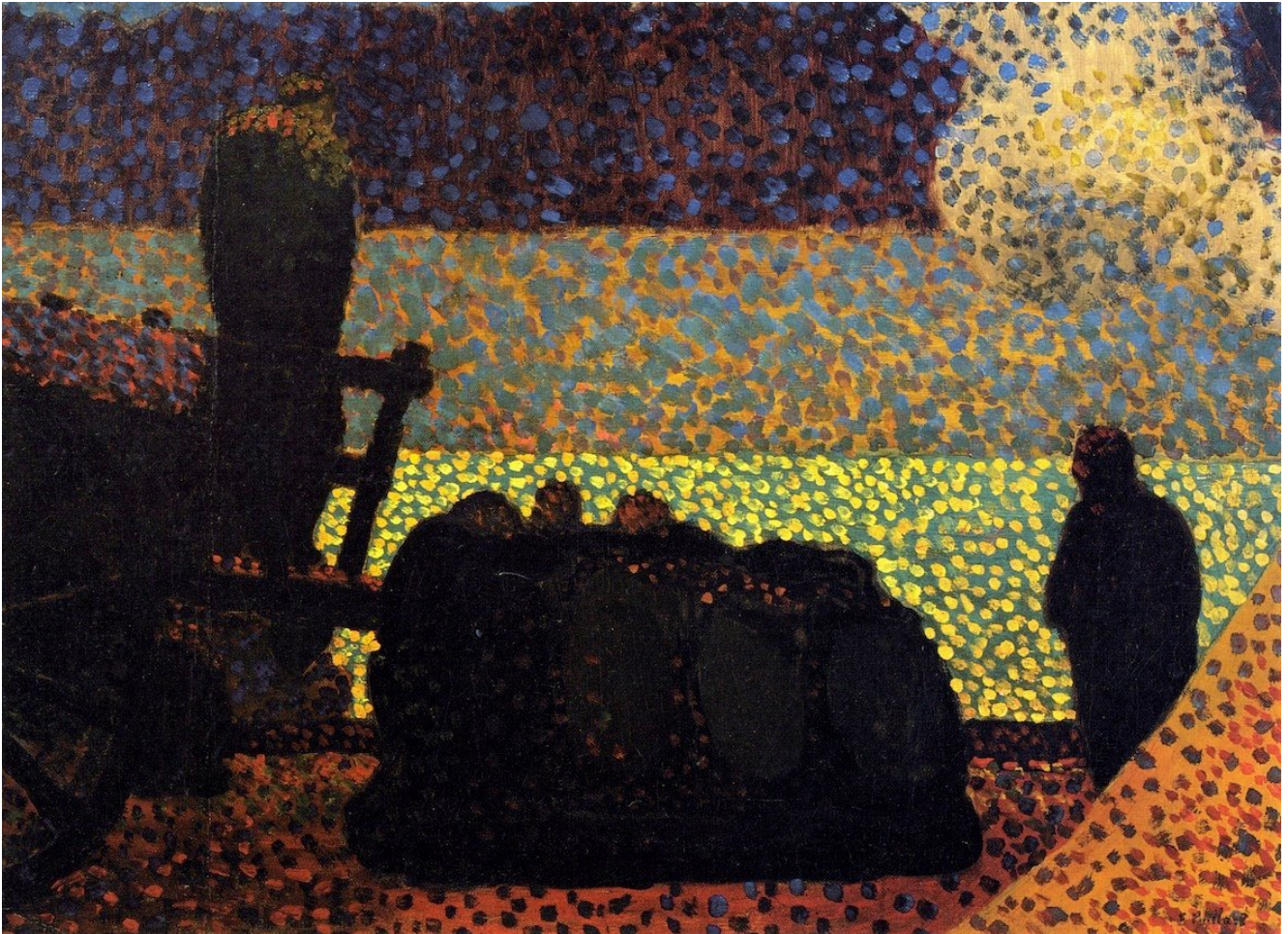


Two Poems

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 repellant 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.

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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