

Night at the Opera

Forget for a moment the overt lecher,
with moustache and cigar, bent
in perpetual crouch; forget too
the intellectual with fake accent,
wearing his round-peaked hat
to pistol-shoot piano notes.
We are the third brother, rapt
harpist creating beauty to forget
himself — all art and will,
trickster, aesthete, he can do
so much, then make a neon getaway.
But he's dumb, needs horn, whistle
to get the message through. There
we see ourselves: clever,
inarticulate save through fingers
others haven't patience for.
In top hat, curls, he's we
till he betrays us with a leer:
a silent hotcha for a pair of boobs.

JOHN DITSKY

My Night to Howl

Stoker speaks of "harmless"
Slovaks standing along
the road, "rather wanting
in natural self-assertion."
True enough: in the bad
old days in Transylvania,
all eyes were on the winged
and fanged Count. Suave
Dracula ruled his fief
snug in his tailored box;
Magyars were getting into
everything, while we,
brute peasants, hewed
and drew. But nights
of capery are over now:
Lugosi's gone, his bat's
estate's staked out
by other hands; the once-
bared humble heads
perched above a serf's tunic
now see the moon
of a new night rising,
grow hairily confident,
discover a voice and bay —

JOHN DITSKY