

AUSTIN HUMMELL

SIT IF YOU WILL

In Budapest the taxi drivers never honk,
the children are as silent as children get,
and the teenagers in the park whisper
while they tug wine straight from the bottle.
The sound inside the Green Sheep Bar
is like the low rumble of the stomach
of a modest man with 2 coats on. The choicest water
they call *still*, but the calmest of all
runs through the heart of a girl called Thea.
Say Thay ya. Pretend you don't know her. Pretend
you can't make it to the church where every hymn
begins with her. Sit in the pew of the train station
and listen for it. Remember the scent of her,
the leather belts in the street, the purses of sheep.

In Budapest the moonshine comes in pear
and cherry and skips off the tables
outside the cafes where inside they make
the face-punching stuff. God is it strong.
God isn't strong as it, nor does she boast such proof
of her existence. Any proof more than one
hundred must be bragging and is unlikely
to be flavored with fruit grown mainly on the plains,
the Great Hungarian Plains
to be exact, whence pear and apricot grow,
whence plum in abundance come to swell
and stock the bottled Brandy.

She's a fine girl. Serves a hundred drunks
a day. In Budapest the waitress warns you
with a hush when your decibels become
American. If she has to, she'll remind you
that the tables are hers, the palinka, hers,
and that she takes the Sabbath when she wants the Sabbath.
In Budapest none of us has a prayer
of being there. None of us can sing
through her the first damn thing about rage.