

from Juked #6, Spring 2009

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## BANVARD'S FOLLY

*"Does anyone still want to go with me into a panorama?"*

*– Max Brod*

The sun floats down river  
Resting from a long day.  
As Banvard draws love

Birds in the sand.  
She tries to explain  
How his deformity angers her.

Unable, she leaves him  
On the other side of the shore.  
Banvard becomes a traveling salesman,

A campfire fiddler,  
A drunk, a painter of shores.  
Yearning for her –

He turns her into the Mississippi shore.  
Riding the long river, floating  
On a brush, he paints her portrait.

Huge bolts of love  
The canvas sags from longing  
Immense wood contraption

(Gears-pulleys crank machinery)  
Three miles of canvas.

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An uninterrupted portrait.

The papers publish the spectacle  
*"The hunch back painter and his panorama!"*  
He builds a wooden stage

Winds up river then down.  
The lines are long, (.50 cents.)  
They wait for hours . . .

He sits in the middle  
Of hungry brush stroke  
Up river

Down. Up river down  
Eyes straining—  
To find her.

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