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