

Old Dubuque

*There is no past, present and future time
here in Dubuque, there is just Dubuque time.*

—Richard Bissell

Dave Etter

*This poem is from Go Read The River, University of Nebraska Press,
1966.*

From Grant's grave Galena
we drove down in a daze
(from two days of antiques)
to the Mississippi,
then crossed over at noon
to old, hunchbacked Dubuque:
A never-say-die town,
a gray, musty pawnshop,
still doing business; while
on the bluff, blue jeans flap
in a river wind laced
with fresh paint and dead carp.

We couldn't find the house
where she once lived and died
(at ninety, baking bread)
somewhere in the hard maze
of crusty shops and streets.
And Dubuque is a spry,
goofy-sad river gal,
lost in a patchwork haze
of tears and years gone by;
and I love this mad place
like my dead grandmother
loved her steins of Star beer.

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