

Luke Steiner discovers an unknown, undocumented drawing by Pieter Brueghel, The Elder. To prove the existence, establish the provenance, and inform the world of Brueghel's lost drawing, Luke will confront the persistent presence of evil.

Brueghel, The Elder

By Robert R Hamlyn

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Brueghel, The Elder

A Novel

Robert R Hamlyn

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Author's Note

Brueghel, the Elder is a novel. It is fiction. I made it up. The names of most of the characters are a combination of random access and a brief perusal of my book shelf with an exception for the names cited in historical accounts. You will probably recognize them when you see them. Otherwise, any similarity between a fictitious character and an actual person is simply coincidental. The university attended by the narrator has been left unnamed, as he states, "You've heard of it but it doesn't matter; they are all pretty similar." As far as I am aware, there is no university in the United States that has a whole school devoted to the study of Art and Art History. I would assume any department of art and/or art history would be incorporated into a larger school of Arts & Sciences, (let's call it literary license). As far as the location of the school, that is up to you. If you choose to imagine it in the Northeast U.S., the Mid-West, or on the West Coast, have at it. Also, as far as I am aware, *The Wages of Sin*, is fictional. I made it up. I hope you will enjoy *Brueghel, the Elder*.

There is nothing so important as art in the world, nothing so constructive, so life-sustaining.

Robert Henri, The Art Spirit, 1923

1

There was a time in which I believed that making art was the motive force in human nature. That notion may brush up against Schopenhauer a little bit, I don't know, I'm not a philosophical kind of guy. In any event, I am not sure that I believe it anymore. Mr. Shakespeare told us that the object of art is to give life a shape (Midsummer Night's Dream). Maybe so. Who knows?

It has been said that, as human beings, we are hard wired to believe that objects speak to us. I don't know where I heard that: maybe on the radio somewhere. In any event, there was an object, I was absolutely sure and certain, that was speaking to me. Well, no, actually, *it was screaming at me!* I was surprised nobody else could hear it. The object was a drawing.

My name is Lucas. Lucas M. Steiner. The "M" stands for Maler. In German, the word "maler" means "painter." We will see how far that got me. My friends call me Luke; of course, they never pass up the opportunity to use it.

"LUKE, I AM YOUR FAAATHER."

I cannot describe in words how much I have come to loathe that line. Don't misunderstand: I thought the movie was great—just like everybody else. But after you've heard the same joke a

thousand times, the charm wears thin. And invariably they say it as if they were the first person to have thought of it.

The last impresario of impish wit went so far as to put a metal trashcan on his head to get that much-coveted “voice of god” effect. It was that kind of party. He then walked smack into the edge of a swinging kitchen door and landed square on his ass. He leaned back against the wall and remained there the rest of the evening. The guests had to step over him to get to the beer and the avocado dip in the refrigerator. I don’t go to parties so much anymore. Suffice it to say, the Force has not been with me.

At one time in my life, I thought things would be different. I thought I would be tenured, published, renowned and happily on my way to a well-endowed retirement by now. Instead, I am here telling you this story and wondering if Social Security will still exist when I get there. Things didn’t work out as I had planned. Who knew?

I wanted to teach. Specifically, I wanted to teach art. During my post-graduate years at the school—you’ve heard of it but it doesn’t matter; they are all pretty similar—I had the opportunity to teach an art history class. I loved art. I loved the making of it. I loved the history of it. I loved teaching it and, if I was good enough and lucky enough, I may have imparted a little of that love to some of those previously unimpressed minds full of mush.

My teaching schedule was pretty agreeable. It consisted of a 90 minute lecture twice a week and office hours on class days. I taught a survey course—sort of a “greatest hits” list of the marquee masters. The remainder of my time was spent on research with access to the school’s art library and museum. But,

for all the love and good intentions and splendid environment, I was lacking something.

Time was running short and my dissertation would be due soon. I had managed to narrow the general topic down to northern Flemish painters in the Sixteenth Century, but I was missing that unique thing that would make it pop and snap; I was missing that exclusive insight that would make it stand apart from the thousand previous dissertations on northern Flemish painters. In other words, I had yet to come up with a theme for my dissertation—I had no idea what it was going to be about.

As a rule, most people begin thinking about their dissertations sooner than I did. Most candidates take five years to research and write a dissertation though some do it in four. This is why PhD candidates are compelled by program requirements to meet with their advisers periodically while they are writing their dissertations. Exceptions can be made but a candidate can only request so many extensions. Since my school was an absolute stickler for things like good order, decorum, turning assignments in on time, etc, the administration took the position that all the corners that could be cut had been, and now it was time to pay the piper. Let's just say that I was advanced in my years of graduate study and they were getting impatient.

In any event, I happened to see my adviser almost daily. Doctor William Skuller was this year's Chair of the Department of Art History. The position of Chairperson—it used to be short for Chairman, but we wouldn't want to appear as if we may be sexist, Heaven forbid—is a rotating three year assignment. This time it was Bill's turn, he had won the majority of votes of his peers.

His office was in the same building as the art school's slide library. He taught some of the classes I took as an undergraduate student. After my stint in the military, he was the one who encouraged me to return to school and pursue the graduate degree. Over time we had grown close. He had become my mentor; I like to think I had become his friend.

I spent a fair amount of time in the slide room pulling slides for upcoming lectures—I know, it's old school, but that's the way I did it. His office was just down the hall on the other side of the corridor. I often popped into his office on my way to or from the slide room.

“Lucas, I'm not getting any younger. When are you going to show me your first draft?” Doctor Bill Skuller asked as I unceremoniously dumped myself into one of the overstuffed chairs in his office. I liked his office. The top of his desk was covered with file pages of photographic slides, papers, and students' blue books crammed with panicky-penned essays. Every wall was lined with books: left to right and top to bottom. Piles of books were stacked on the floor about the periphery of the space from the front door to the back wall.

I like books. I love the physical presence of books in my life. Books comfort me. They give me a sense of insulation and protection. You can read Ambrose Bierce's “An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge” on an e-reader but that medium does not possess the same promise of a physical reality as do the printed words in a physical book that you can hold in your hands and slap shut when you've finished the story—just as the protagonist's world slaps shut when he realizes it was all a dream; just like you

would clap your hands at the end of a performance. Because that is what it is...a performance by the author.

The books made me feel comforted; it was also a little weird—I mean, how much more space could they occupy before they took over—were they encroaching on our habitat or was it the other way around?

Dr. Skuller politely waited for a response.

“Yeah, about that...” I absent-mindedly cast my leg over an arm of the chair. It was an awkward posture in an awkward moment.

“You haven’t even started, have you?”

I think my face turned red. “It’s hard to start writing when you don’t have any ideas.”

“What have you been spending your research time on?” He asked.

“Northern Flemish painters of the 16th century.” I mumbled.

“Yes. And on what did we agree?”

“That I needed to focus on one school, or one region, or one painter.”

“Yes, and on whom did you focus?”

“I don’t know yet.” I said, lamely.

By this point in time, you may be getting the notion that I don’t always (seldom if ever) colour inside the lines.

Actually, I had done most of my research on Pieter Brueghel, the Elder. There were so many good painters in the Clan Brueghel it was hard not to focus on the patriarch. With either direct familial lineage or ties through marriage, the clan Bruegel represented three distinct and separate generations of artistic excellence in the Low Countries of Flanders. I mean, why not? Brueghel the Elder

was the pioneer. But I wasn't ready to declare it yet. What was I going to add to the body of research and presumed knowledge about Brueghel the Elder that hadn't already been written? I mean, think of where I was looking: in books—that someone else had written. What original thought about Brueghel and his work, that no one else had as yet conceived, could I possibly contribute?

A fellow student, Mari B—that would be Marian B. Pye in the School of Anthropology — made the observation that Modern Man (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) had been around for about 160,000 years. Ok, so, that's 158,000 years before Christ. "Isn't it possible," she posited, "that in the past two thousand years, there really are no new ideas?" It made sense to me, but really, I had no clue. I sure didn't have any new ideas about Brueghel either. I was stuck.

Dr. Skuller was not amused. "Lucas, I don't get the sense that you grasp the urgency here." It was awfully quiet. He sat like a predatory barn owl waiting for the mouse to poke out its head. The only things that moved were his eyelids. He peered at me through his bottle-bottomed glasses, his gray beard enveloping the lower portion of his face, his neck, and a good part of his upper torso. Confined to a wheelchair, he was a paraplegic that navigated life with high-order intelligence, transformative ingenuity, and a healthy dose of humor. Most of the time.

"I'm still workin' on it." I offered, forlorn and bereft of spirit. He blinked.

"I know, Bill, I know. I need to see something different; I just don't know what it is yet."

He mutely sat in judgment—sort of, maybe, I really couldn't tell. He wore his daily uniform of Corduroy jacket, flannel shirt,

dungarees, and doe skin moccasins. In Bill's youth he had served a stint in the Navy and used the GI Bill to go to college. This was prior to the onset of Muscular Dystrophy. Eight years later, he accepted the award of his PhD from a wheel chair.

"Lucas, you are drowning in your own wake."

He surmised the situation pretty accurately. I had made a lot of inquiries in the course of my research but they had led nowhere definite. I was floundering in a metric shit ton of information and could see no particular way to go with it.

"Well, maybe this will help you develop some sense of direction in the little time you have left."

He shoved a piece of embossed parchment paper across the top of his desk. The motion came from simultaneously twisting his torso and pushing from the shoulder. I got up from the chair and looked; it was an invitation, addressed to him, to an exclusive preview of works to be auctioned at Windworth & Co, Auctioneers.

"How did you get this?"

I knew Bill had a small but noteworthy collection of masters' drawings from the early Renaissance but I didn't realize that the caliber of pieces to be auctioned were within his purview.

"I dabble."

He poured hot sweet tea from a thermos. He was tenured, an internationally-renowned art historian and author, and in that particular year he was Chair of the department. He still brown bagged it.

"Well, are we going?" I asked.

He unwrapped his cheese & onion sandwich; mustard dripped from it. It wasn't regular mustard that most people would put on

a cheese sandwich—it was the mouth cauterizing, soul-searing kind you get in some Chinese restaurants.

“It’s up to you.” He sipped his tea.

“The invitation states ‘Admit Two.’ What about Mrs. Bill?”

“Lizzie has a prior engagement—girl’s night out.” He bit into the sandwich and winced.

Then I got home. Jeeesus Cha-rist, what a three-ring circus that turned out to be. Let me state right here and now that my wife Amity is the love of my life. However, we have had our moments. This turned out to be one of them. Her friend Ana happened to be there. Ana Cortes is a great gal; best savored in smaller doses. Ana was funny, smart as a whip, and engaging. She couldn’t help but be part of the activity, whatever the activity may be. No, really, she could not help it. I came into the apartment brimming with what I thought was good news.

“Hey,” I said to Amity and nodded to Ana, not to be rude.

“Guess what? Bill got an invitation to a closed preview at Windworth’s and I’m going with him!”

Amity’s response was: “What do you mean you’re going with him?”

“He asked me to go. He said it might help me with my dissertation.”

“And what about Mrs. Skuller? Why isn’t she going?” popped up Ana.

“Because she has girls’ night out that night.” Not sure why I responded to her but I did.

“Then why can’t Amity go?” She quipped.

“Cos the invitation said ADMIT TWO.” I said in a voice that was louder than it should have been.

“Well, that’s no reason.” She said.

“Why am I explaining this to you, Ana?” I asked and picked up her coat. I held out her coat to her, “Thanks for stoppin’ by. Amity and I need to have a conversation.” Ana looked at Amity. Amity gave a sideways nod of her head, indicating the front door.

“Will you be OK?” Ana asked Amity.

“Of course, she’ll be OK. Good night, Ana.” I said, encouraging her out the door with her coat, and shut the door firmly behind her.

“There is no need for you to be rude to my friends.” Amity’s tone was quiet and purposeful and hurt.

“No, Amity, I wasn’t being rude. I came home with what I thought was great news. I was speaking to you. Why does Ana need to get involved in every conversation between you and me? That is intrusive and rude.”

“She wasn’t being intrusive or rude, she is my friend.”

“Why can’t you see that this is important? This will help me.” I pleaded.

“Of course, it’s important, Luke. Everything you do is important, and everything I do, like work, pay the rent, get the groceries, cook the food, that all gets put on the back burner. Cos that stuff’s not important.” She walked away toward the bedroom. “But, oh, no, you’re going out to Windworth’s. That’s a big deal. And I get to sit here at home, alone. Waiting for you to finish having a good time.” And she slammed the bedroom door.

I slept on the couch.

There are moments in our lives, there are moments in a day, when we seem to see beyond the usual—become clairvoyant. We reach then into reality. Such are the moments of our greatest happiness. Such are the moments of our greatest wisdom. If one could but recall his vision by some sort of sign. It was in this hope the arts were invented. Sign-posts on the way to what may be. Sign-posts toward greater knowledge.

Robert Henri, The Art Spirit, 1923

2

There are two well known auction houses in this part of the world: one is on King Street in London, and the other was established in London, but is headquartered in New York City.

They get most of the media attention and often conduct their dramas with much fanfare and circumstance. Not that I am a habitu e of either of those two fine establishments, but I once was told by someone who did attend their festivities on a more-or-less regular basis that it was, and I quote, “A circus atmosphere—P. T. Barnum had nothing on those people.” Not my opinion, you understand, I’m just trying to convey the tone. I think he may have been out-bid on something.

As it happened, Bill’s invitation was to an event hosted by a much smaller company. In the feckless, yet fastidious, pursuit of fad and fashion in the contemporary Art world (art with a capital “A”), old master drawings and anything that could be lumped

under the rubric of Classicism were considered passé, if not irrelevant. That particular year's hot number in trendy acquisition circles was an inexplicable resurgence of Neo-ex, of all things (that would be Neo-expressionism if you want to look it up). Now I'm not pointing fingers or casting aspersions here, but, come on, Neo-ex? They had their run in the 80s, and it was a good one. Schnabel, Basquiat, Haring—I always liked Kieth Haring's work—they were some of the brighter luminaries of the time and the economically self-defined Masters of the Universe were snapping them up, but no matter. The one thing that we art historians are not, is trendy.

Bill and I attended the preview at Windworth's showroom. I suppose it looked much like almost any showroom almost anywhere. The walls were covered with a light beige fabric—so as to not interfere with the presentation of the individual pieces, I imagine. The floor was covered with a neutral, two-tone industrial grade carpet with some sort of repetitive floral pattern; it was busy enough to camouflage the dropped cheese bits and discarded cracker crumbs but not enough to be a distraction.

Popular trends notwithstanding, these particular Old Master works, proffered for view and consideration, represented Windworth's iron clad grasp on the foundational financial substructure of the American Art Market: the blue chip commodities that simultaneously paid off in dividends and garnered prestige.

The assembled guests collectively represented a conservative taste; expensive, well-mannered old money (as opposed to a garish sense of nouveau riche.) Patek Phillipe as opposed to... (pick your own watch; I ain't gonna do it). Bentley as opposed to

(same-same; pick your own). Holbein as opposed to Schnabel (Oh hell yeah, I'm all in). And then there were Bill and me: free-range academics—lightly scorned yet politely tolerated. Well, there is no accounting for taste, I suppose.

The larger pieces were mounted on individual easels, along the side walls, and back-to-back arrayed down the center of the space. The smaller pieces were laid out at an elevated angle on tables along the front and rear walls of the room. Tonight's event, black tie, no-host bar, was a preview to the auction to be held the following day.

The no-host bar thing didn't bother us: Bill didn't drink and I couldn't afford it. Suffice it to say that Bill was not a toney kind of guy, nor was he a slave to fashion. The only concession Bill made to the stipulated dress code of the evening was the black silk bow tie he wore with his hunter-orange flannel shirt. It was required. It said so right on the invitation: black tie. I wore the only tie I had, a regular long black tie of cotton and something; but I spruced it up with a Windsor knot and an EGA tie tack.

The gallery staff mingled amongst the guests ostensibly offering to answer any questions anyone might have had about the works displayed. They blended in nicely with the guys in black suits and stern demeanors—my guess was off-duty cops, moonlighting; their presence requested just to keep an eye on things. Apparently, they were all right-handed. They each sported a chunky rectangular imprint upon the fabric of their suit coat, at about 4 o'clock; just behind the iliac crest of the right hip. For some reason I just got the impression that they were there to size up the crowd. You never can tell when somebody might start listening to the voices in their head and proceed to cut up a

million-dollar Vermeer with a fifty-cent box-cutter; it could happen. The grand milieu gave me an odd feeling—the hair didn't stand up on the back of my neck or anything like that—I just felt funny, like trying to go skinny dipping with a school of sharks.

The piano guy in the corner was playing random selections from the Tommy Flanagan and Bill Evans songbooks with effortless grace, expertly accompanied by drums and acoustic base. Fabulously-coiffed women in fabulous black gowns were placed in strategic reserve throughout the gallery space offering printed catalogs in four-color lithography replicating the pieces to be auctioned.

“Super models imported from Brazil for the occasion?” I asked Bill. And I would have believed him if he had said “yes”.

“No, they were imported from the modeling agency down the street,” he answered. He signaled his intended destination with his right hand and I wheeled the chair in the proper direction. Bill's wheelchair was a self-propelled, state-of-the-art, marvel of design and horsepower...insofar as it was battery operated. I was as necessary as flippers on a snake. But, being the designated driver did give me some sense of purpose. Bill was delighted to accept the tendered catalog from the gracious young lady and we meandered about, at large.

We took in the proffered works at a leisurely pace. If Bill was interested in taking more than a casual glance, he indicated as much by extending the first two fingers of his right hand and bending the hand back at the wrist as far as he was able. I would stop, and, when he was ready to resume his tour of inspection, he would repeat the gesture.

I thought I recognized a few things and then had to check the little placards to make sure I was right.

Holbein, right.

Rembrandt, right.

Urs Graaf, damnit--missed that one.

Durer, right.

Mathias Niethart-Gothard, right, also called *Grunewald*—yeah, I know.

Wolf Huber, damnit.

Hans Beham, damnit.

Burckmair, damnit. I was batting about .500.

Attributed To the School of Van Aelst, Wait-a-minute. What! No way. It didn't say that. What!?

In its frame, the drawing was one of the larger pieces on a free-standing easel. I stopped in mid-stride and took the whole thing in—top to bottom, vertical axis, left to right, horizontal axis. I focused on a spatial point between my pupil and the frontal picture plane, putting the image out of focus to enhance the geometric shapes formed by the groupings of people in peasant dress: triangle, rectangle, sphere.... I could hear my heart pounding in my ears. I was almost dizzy.

“Oh, shit...” I'm supposed to take medicine for high blood pressure. Every now and then I forget. I had forgotten to take it that morning.

Attributed to the school of Van Aelst—that's what the placard said, but I was skeptical. As well-documented as these pieces were, assigning a piece to the school of so-and-so was akin to saying: “We don't have a clue who made this piece, but it looks

kinda like so-and-so's work or possibly the work of one of his many students...possibly...maybe."

Bill turned his head as far to the left as he could manage, trying to look at me.

"What's the matter? We're holding up traffic."

"Bill, do you see this?" I asked.

"Yeah, so what?"

"Read the placard."

He did. "Yeah, I get it, let's go." We moved on. "Let's go over to the bar," he directed. He ordered a Coke; I got a Ginger Ale and paid for them. He initiated it: "What about it? 'School of VanAelst'. So what?"

"Did you look at that drawing?" I could barely contain myself. I could not believe what my brain was telling my mind exactly what it was that my eyes had just seen. My sense of balance was off, I had to grab the handle bars behind the back of Bills wheelchair.

"It said 'School of VanAelst'. It could be a hundred different people," he chided. He assumed control of the chair from the digital control box at his finger tips and pulled a vehicular, doughnut-shaped about-face in the showroom carpet. I caught myself before I followed the path of the handlebars, out and away. He looked me in the eyes with a note of no-bullshit concern seeping into his voice.

"You okay," he asked. "One of your eyes is blood-shot. I mean, the white part is full of blood."

That happens sometimes when my blood pressure is up. A blood vessel will pop in the white part of my eye; it's not a big deal, most of the time.

“Yeah, I’m good.” I said, taking no note of my physical sensation at that moment. I pushed on, “And who was VanAelst’s most famous student?” I asked. Bill looked over in the direction of the drawing, which could not be seen from this vantage point due to the viewers that had crowded in front of it.

“Well, maybe.” He shrugged. He looked again toward the drawing, and reconsidered. “No, I don’t think so.” Now he was starting to smile and he couldn’t hide it. As it happens, Pieter Coecke VanAelst’s most famous student was his son-in-law, Pieter Brueghel.

“Bill, if I’m right,” I whispered. “That(!) is a non-catalogued drawing by, by, by...” I could not make myself say the words out loud, but I pointed at it, which may, in retrospect, have been considered gauche in such a refined environment.

“Well, what is it? What do you think you see?” he prompted.

“Hmm?” I asked, distracted, lowering my arm and redirecting my gaze to him.

“What did you see over there?” he asked again, indicating the direction of the drawing with his chin.

“It’s...” I stopped and looked around to ensure no-one was eavesdropping, then I resumed in a whisper. “It’s Brueghel, Brueghel the Elder.”

His chest started heaving up and down and his head started bobbing back-and-forth in a relative motion soon after. It wasn’t a ha-ha kind of laugh. It was a soul-struck, gleeful, speechless, abandonment to the Three Graces: Aglaea, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, the Greek goddesses of splendor, mirth, and good cheer. Then he inhaled and really gave it full vocal attribution. People started looking in our direction.

“Will you please be quiet,” I hissed through clenched teeth. My head felt tight, and my temples hurt. Now he was really out of control. Tears were streaming down his face and he was howling laughter like a werewolf. My chest started to hurt.

“Is your friend OK,” one of the black be-decked super models asked me with concern. And then she asked, “Are you OK?”

We were attracting the attention of a couple of the black-suited, bullet-headed, one eyebrow, no neck, high-and-tight coiffed, fellows.

“He’s fine; so am I.” I assured her with a nervous grin. “He’s just doing this to aggravate me,” I responded— at which Bill roared out another thunderous peal of glee.

“Oh, for God’s sake, keep it down,” I pleaded. The art police were walking toward us.

“Excuse me, sir, is everything all right here?” They looked like twins except one was white.

“Oh, you bet. Everything’s fine.” I nodded and smiled and pointed at the font of hilarity. “Old Bill here, never-a-dull-moment. Heh-heh.”

“Are you OK, sir? Do you require assistance?” The other one ignored me and asked Bill directly. The nerve of that asshole—as if I couldn’t render assistance if need be. Well, actually, I probably couldn’t, but that was beside the point. It took a moment before Bill could speak without giggling.

“I’m fine.” He said and made a subtle sort of placative motion with his hands as if to settle the tension.

“Thank you, gentlemen,” he smiled.

“Yes, sir. Enjoy your evening, sir.” The Hardy Boys gave me a look like it was all my fault and set off to investigate another adventure.

“What were we talking about?” he asked, dabbing at his tear ducts with a red cotton bandanna.

“Brueghel,” I whispered and nodded my head in the direction of the unattributed drawing.

“No. Absolutely not!” He emphatically said, unconsciously assuming the mien of the world renowned art historian he, in fact, was.

“We know that it is not because every painting, drawing, and print Brueghel ever produced was documented seven different ways from Sunday, and that isn’t one of them.”

“Yes, they were all catalogued and well-documented,” I quietly conceded, “except for the pieces that his wife burned at his direction as he lay upon his death-bed.”

Bill wasn’t buying it. However, let us note: it is generally acknowledged that at the time of Brueghel’s death in 1569 there were a number of pieces that he did not want found in his wife’s possession for fear that she would receive the blame from the Spanish Inquisitors extant in Belgium at that time.

At the drop of a hat, Bill ceased all pretense at Court Jester and, once again, sprung into the persona of predatory barn owl.

“So, you actually have narrowed your focus for your dissertation,” he accused.

“Well, maybe a little,” I admitted.

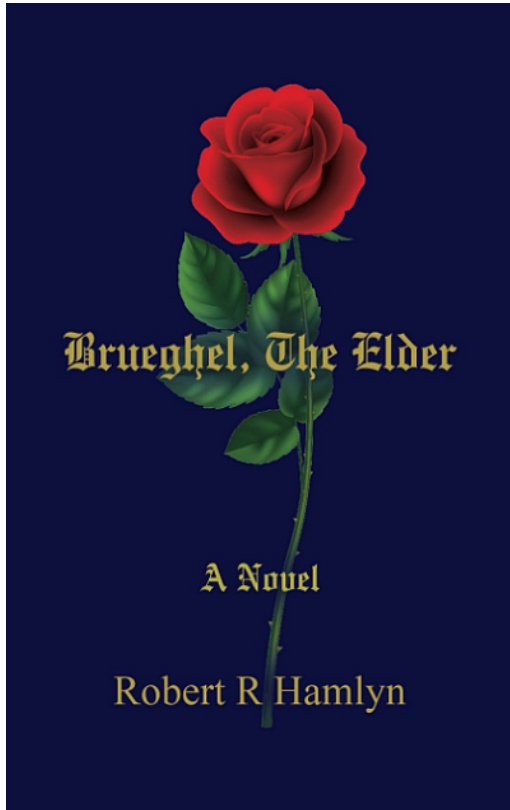
“So, when am I going to see your first draft? How many words is it so far,” he asked.

“You’ll see it after I write it and I don’t know how many words are in it yet.” I said, looking in the direction of the drawing.

“Alright, fine,” he conceded. “Let’s go look at it again.”

We did. The crowd that had gathered around the easel had now dissipated. We were able to observe the piece at length. After a time, Bill meandered his chariot over to another piece and I lost track of his whereabouts. I stood there unbothered, unfettered, unattached. It was as near to solace in solitude as I could achieve in a room with other people in it. I stared at the main figure prominent in the frontal plane; I stared at the several smaller figures in the middle plane and I stared at the tower at the edge of the far plane. As God is my witness, I swear I could hear it talking to me. *Brueghel*. Believe me or don’t. It doesn’t matter.

Unfortunately, photography was not permitted in the showroom. That would have been helpful. But, at any rate, it never occurred to me at the time. I didn’t even think of it until much later. Did Bill know that that drawing was going to be there that night?



Luke Steiner discovers an unknown, undocumented drawing by Pieter Brueghel, The Elder. To prove the existence, establish the provenance, and inform the world of Brueghel's lost drawing, Luke will confront the persistent presence of evil.

Brueghel, The Elder

By Robert R Hamlyn

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