

*Jesse Arthur Stone*

**French Frogman**

A French provincial frogman  
replete with gadzookery and

allomorphic antibias apprises  
the situation culturally and

chooses a croissant and  
cafe au lait. Meanwhile,

the passive-aggressive  
particle accelerator plays

domestic terrorist war  
games with the Pentagon

deploying a radiomimetio  
radarscope to trace the

infiltration of the positronium  
in the post strike sous du jour.

The squawk box began to whine  
and the single-wing snap-back

snorkel floated into view as  
the frogman's face surfaced

unfazed and he set forth to  
instigate an unambiviantly

zingy whing-ding in celebration  
of his unlikely promotion for

besting the generals at their  
own subaqueous subterfuses.

## Degrees of Connection

Listening to Brahms' *Hungarian Dances*, I think  
how hunky-dory the Hunkies are, their folk dances

by turns joyful and melancholic with those wonderfully sprung  
syncopations. And then I recall reading that the Hungarians

are linguistically akin to both the Finns and the Koreans,  
and I remember mentioning this to Hemin, a genetics researcher

at work, who is from Korea, who said he was not surprised  
because in graduate school he and a fellow student from Hungary

discovered that their parents put up food for the winter in exactly  
the same way—pickles and cabbage stored in a clay pot, buried

in a hole in the ground, covered with hay, inside a shed. Then I remember  
telling Bert, a horticulturist from Venezuela, whom I met at my friends

Nick and Debbie's New Year's open house, about a review I read  
of a book that claims culture and the preparation of food are one

in the same and that this was after telling him about me seeing a book  
titled *Soil and Civilization* when I worked at a college library where

I was a cataloger of Russian and German texts and how I used to sniff  
the pages of the books as they came in because they each had such

distinct odors and how my co-workers would tease me about this.

But getting back to that book I mentioned, I recalled how at first I laughed

at such a ridiculous title, but realized later that the condition of soil  
in different parts of the world probably did have a lot to do with how

our ancestors fared and with the rise and fall of civilizations  
and Bert said he had no doubt about it and that he had actually majored

in agronomy and would like to get a hold of that book and read it. And  
I said, yes, I'd like to read it too, and it became clear to me, once again,

how we are all connected. Then I remembered Spencer Wells' book about population genetics and the fact that all of us alive today have

the original African genetic markers in our blood and that by his tracing the genetic mutations of people and countries around the globe

he has been able to map the various migrations of humans out of Africa to all the other areas of the world. Then I wondered if genetic mutations

could be traced all the way back to our primate forebears, and if it is possible to detect the point at which extraterrestrials mated with bonobos to give rise to

humans, and in an epiphany I understood that we are *all* Africans; we are *all* stardust, and I looked up to share these profound insights with my new acquaintance,

only to realize he had already left. Then I realized everyone, including my wife, also had left, and that only Nick and Debbie were still there. They had come out of the kitchen

after cleaning up and were looking at me as though to say, "Why are you still here?" So then I left got up and left, And that's all I'm going to say about that.