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The Devil in Arcadia, Iowa

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HENRY ISRAELI

The Devil in Arcadia, Iowa

154 When the school cracks open the children pour in.
A poster above the door reads, "Free knowledge offered
Monday through Friday." Today, while the last patch of snow
settles apprehensively into a cornfield, they will learn
"the Biology of the Anthropoid." And it's true, as the Principal says,
that the children, like lab-frogs about to be pinned through the chest,
are growing agitated. If you listen carefully you can hear their small hearts
chirping away like nail clippers, you can feel their anxiety hover
like a murder of crows above the cornfield. Next to the school yard
a red-headed teenager leans out of a pick-up,
makes shadow-puppets along the asphalt. Down the road,
inside an abandoned barn, a girl of twelve is losing her virginity
while, on the other side of town, a young boy smiles
as he catches a glass butterfly in his bare hands.