

2009

Talking Frotteur Blues

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Recommended Citation

Capozzi, James. "Talking Frotteur Blues." *The Iowa Review* 39.3 (2009): 180-181. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.6773>

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JAMES CAPOZZI

Talking Frotteur Blues

I.

Tell me the night
of the Church of the Sloe
when some Godfearing men
duly heaved duly hoed
and raised ten corpses
from hollows and mire
and thawed them in
the fire's blue breath smoking

there, in the wild stillness.

Tell what happened
when they ran out of work
out of murdered drunks
travelers snared by the mire.
When the bog was again
a far silent place
exorcised of pieces
of arms and faces

and other such material
none of us know otherwise.

II.

As this county kept some of the old
patchwork, his voice rode
ancient music reeling underneath

until, one morning, calling through
the remnants of a barn set
artfully afire, the ruin became

a riddle: murmurs emerged
for the geezer on the farther side
whose son had gone to town once, avenger.

III.

A man who can do
 and undo what he wants
walks into a bog that is also
 a loneliness.

Just him and the bog
 and the sound the sods make
as some things are so large
 they must make a sound

as they mass at the edge
 of our homes, of our sheep.
He can't hear them, they've always been
 there always will be

other mere ghosts of the county.
 Isn't it enough
that you have heard of this place
 traveler, that you have eaten

at its marble table?
 Isn't it enough
that you me and the man share
 one memory, at most?