

**Jay Rogoff**

**DEATH'S SYMPATHY**

He felt bad for them—not guilty, just bad  
enough to offer them some stately twangling  
on his ukulele as they left, straggling  
as in a funeral dance. He'd play their guide,  
helping them choose their rest stops while they cried  
tears, naturally; he'd boost their pride, rankling  
with rejection; he'd help the poor guy drudging—  
he'd shovel, jawboning side by side, same side

his wife sprang from, supermodel-gaunt, bone-  
thin then, now zaftig, apple-cheeked, windfall-  
fed. But their endless busywork! Toil, spin,

each day wasted in digging a deeper hole—  
for what? Let her keep cooing at their son  
nursing, the one he'd heard them call, yes, Cain.

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