

Summer 1996

Rat Takes His Constitutional translated by Daniel Bourne

Stanislaw Esden-Tempski

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Esden-Tempski, Stanislaw (1996) "Rat Takes His Constitutional translated by Daniel Bourne," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 46 , Article 22.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss46/22>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

STANSILAW ESDEN-TEMPSKI
TRANSLATED BY DANIEL BOURNE

RAT TAKES HIS CONSTITUTIONAL

he steps out on the sandy gray between the cages
the face of the lab assistant who hangs his chicken neck
each day on a scarf the color of a drab sky
who keeps check of the dials' unmoving faces
by now the rat's

paws are killing him and dead on the launchsite of a
tramstop
stands an empty tramcar all instruments out the arm
sticks up
to the wires like a hand left from some unknown battle
the rat
scratches his head and finds they forgot to close his
skull
after surgery—with great distaste he flings
off the sticky residue of an unknown neurological salve

looking into the haughty eyes of windows the rat bows
his head
and slowly measures the city only now realizing
he can never get out at the end of the corridor
the dirty curtain of the sky hangs and with a slight gust
of air
he sees behind the scaffolding of the laboratory cages
a broken down mechanism naked as day

the twinkle of instruments in cabinets like the milky
way

the derricks and instruments the silly snout
of the moon nodding on a long metal stalk the red
clammer
of dials as they sink below the horizon the darkening of
dust
swept with a brush under the rug of night beyond the
edges
of the table the unknown menace of the ever-expanding
lab