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Two Poems

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Two Poems

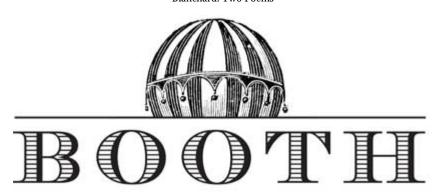
Abstract

"We Do This" and "Mine Own Baudelaire"

Keywords

poems, history, soul mates

Blanchard: Two Poems





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Two Poems

by Drew Blanchard

We Do This

The rebellion of the young who called for a new earth was a Sham, and that generation has written the verdict on itself,

Listening with indifference to the cries of those who perish Because they are after all just barbarians killing each other

And the lives of the well-fed are worth more than the lives of the starving.

—Czesław Miłosz

History is never kind to muted voices, to the *other* kind, even when heated, their words are sublimated never sublime. We write them wrongly, wrong them, crush them, ignore them, mostly.

Who they are we'll never know or show them we do when we do, even in that brief moment when that something in their eye lets us see their human side, their tortured mind. If we relate, we'll see the stakes, but it's too late, justice is not just blind: it's deaf too. If we put an ear to the ground we can hear mustang-ghosts thunder across plains. But with one ear skyward do we not lose one of two sound-tools? That's how we move from the past, how we present our presence: we plane down unsightly bumps, smooth out knotty surfaces. We do this so we can hear like a head dunked in ice water, the frozen cries, muffled,

* * *

bubble and disappear.

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Mine Own Baudelaire

As a kid I read Global Soul Mates. It's not a book about the lover you're destined to run away with or drink Cabernet with, the person you share your nightmares, bodily fluids or dreams with, but the soul mate from another shore who looks, thinks, acts as you do. Somewhere in the world everyone has an identical twin: such a frightening yet romantic thing. I always pictured my kindred spirit as a modern day Baudelaire, writing in an overpriced Parisian closet. I always wonder what we owe our other us? Imagine being responsible for two of you: the balance of laundry, checkbooks and eating well, the challenge of maintaining sleep enough to remain employed. Imagine, on top of this, the constant worry that the other you might be home, spilling coffee on your favorite Persian rug. At the Post Office today, I looked up from the *Times* to the entire line glaring at me. I thought they must be staring past me, outside, at some horrific accident, but I turned only to find the line behind glancing down or away. Zipper? It would not

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have been the first time. A casual left handed brush. No. On my way out I stopped to put my new Peregrine Falcon stamps on my weekly letters to the editor and there he was: the big green eyes, pouty lips, (yes, I have pouty lips,) receding hairline and clean shaven beard. Mine own Baudelaire, not French, not living in Paris, possibly not a poet at all, but from the poster I learned of his previous employment as the borrower of many cars; I learned too that his Wanted award was larger than my gross income for the entire nineteen-nineties.

Drew Blanchard's first collection of poems, Winter Dogs, is forthcoming from Salmon Poetry (spring, 2011). His writing has appeared in Best New Poets 2008 (Samovar Press) and literary magazines, including Notre Dame Review, Guernica Magazine, Gulf Stream Magazine, and Meridian. Blanchard is a two-time recipient of an Academy of American Poets prize. He holds an MFA in poetry from The Ohio State University and is a PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee.

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