Two Poems

Drew Blanchard

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Two Poems

Abstract
"We Do This" and "Mine Own Baudelaire"

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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._

—Czeslaw Milosz

_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.

* * *
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
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.