



Booth

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Volume 3 | Issue 2

Article 3

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2-18-2011

## Two Poems

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### Recommended Citation

Blanchard, Drew (2011) "Two Poems," *Booth*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 2 , Article 3.

Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/booth/vol3/iss2/3>

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## Two Poems

### Abstract

"We Do This" and "Mine Own Baudelaire"

### Keywords

poems, history, soul mates



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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.

\* \* \*

## 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

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.*

PUBLISHED: February 18, 2011

FILED UNDER: Uncategorized

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