

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

December 22, 2006

Friday Poem

Filed under: [poetry](#), [snow](#) — alecsothblog @ 7:12 am

The main reason to have 'Snow Week' was to end it with this poem:

The Snow Man

by Wallace Stevens

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

9 Comments

1. I get it...like snow week. OK, that's all well and good IF you have snow. Virtual snow just doesn't cut it. Here in the NE we have yet to see a snowflake. There will be no white Christmas this year. But being from Texas, I can live with that.

Comment by Frank Armstrong — December 22, 2006 @ [9:45 am](#)

2. You mean ... All along ... My God, you are Kaiser Sothe!

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the black bird.

Have a good holiday, everyone, but don't wait up for any British visitors: here in the UK, we are having Fog Week, and all flights are grounded.

Comment by [Mike C.](#) — December 22, 2006 @ [11:02 am](#)

3. nice words to end the week Alec. have a good holiday!

Comment by [ben](#) — December 22, 2006 @ [12:17 pm](#)

4. I wish that this blog had a place to click and just somehow make the words and images transform into a nice not too heavy book maybe a Japanese-style softcover with great paper which I could hold in my hands or read lying on my back in bed turning the pages back and forth back and forth then click again it would fold up and go back into the virtual world. Everything about it feels more material than digital.

Comment by Susan — December 22, 2006 @ [1:14 pm](#)

5. ...nice idea...susan... i print it many times, so i can read it laying in my sofa... nice hollydays to everybody!!

Comment by [ruben](#) — December 22, 2006 @ [1:23 pm](#)

6. In honor of snow week, I have chosen to share a poem by Emily Dickinson. I live on Dickinson St. and if this poem were an address it would be 2 and a half blocks from my house.

—

The Snow that never drifts —
The transient, fragrant snow
That comes a single time a Year
Is softly driving now —

So thorough in the Tree
At night beneath the star
That it was February's Foot
Experience would swear —

Like Winter as a Face
We stern and former knew
Repaired of all but Loneliness
By Nature's Alibi —

Were every storm so spice
The Value could not be —
We buy with contrast — Pang is good
As near as memory —

Emily Dickinson
#1133

Comment by [Zoe Strauss](#) — December 22, 2006 @ [8:01 pm](#)

7. Thanks for the kind words Susan. And thanks for the poem Zoe. Here is yet another snow poem (and Christmas poem too!) for the Japanese-style softcover:

December: Revisiting my old isolation room

by Franz Wright

Lit window-
I know you're still up
there
(in the past)
where I left you

Scrawny starlings building
out of nothing hopeless shelter
in the snowy corner of
that window gone abruptly dark

I freely stand here
watching
while you burn
unheard
among the screaming, the

zombies, the pacers, the shit-fingerpainters and furious
nocturnal soliloquists

A bone-freezing wind blows. My mother
always left a shot of whiskey out
for Santa Claus, someone confides
quietly
close to my ear
twenty years ago...

I think someone had lighted a candle for me
I am sure of it
with so few plausible causes
to justify the current
and remarkably convincing
impression of one of the normal
with which I no (most days) present. But

the unvisited

in dark churches
by their families now
unmentioned:

wind, cold wind, they blow the candles out and haunt Noel.

Comment by [Alec Soth](#) — December 22, 2006 @ [9:56 pm](#)

8. Please don't forget the old masters in the softcover book.

This first fallen snow
is barely enough to bend
the jonquil leaves

-Basho

Comment by [Clint Weathers](#) — December 23, 2006 @ [2:56 pm](#)

9. Not a poem, but a consoling thought for the snowless Northeasterners this year (so far anyway...)

'If every word spoken in New York City daily were somehow to materialize as a snowflake, each day there would be a blizzard.'

Kenneth Goldsmith

Comment by [Mark S](#) — December 23, 2006 @ [3:27 pm](#)