

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

June 15, 2007

Friday Poem

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The Seventh Inning

by Donald Hall

1. Baseball, I warrant, is not the whole
occupation of the aging boy.
Far from it: There are cats and roses;
there is her water body. She fills
the skin of her legs up, like water;
under her blouse, water assembles,
swelling lukewarm; her mouth is water,
her cheekbones cool water; water flows
in her rapid hair. I drink water

2. from her body as she walks past me
to open a screen door, as she bends
to weed among herbs, or as she lies
beside me at five in the morning
in submarine light. Curt Davis threw
a submarine ball, terrifying
to right-handed batters. Another
pleasure, thoroughly underrated,
is micturition, which is even

3. commoner than baseball. It begins
by announcing itself more slowly
and less urgently than sexual
desire, but (confusingly) in the
identical place. Ignorant men
therefore on occasion confuse beer-
drinking with love; but I have discussed

adultery elsewhere. We allow
this sweet release to commence itself,

4. addressing a urinal perhaps,
perhaps poised over a white toilet
with feet spread wide and head tilted back:
oh, what'delicious permission! what
luxury of letting go! what luxe
yellow curve of mildest ecstasy!
Granted we may not compare it to
poignant and crimson bliss, it is as
voluptuous as rain all night long

5. after baseball in August's parch. The
jade plant's trunk, as thick as a man's wrist,
urges upward thrusting from packed dirt,
with Chinese vigor spreading limbs out
that bear heavy leaves—palpable, dark,
juicy, green, profound: They suck, the way
bleacher fans claim inhabitants of
box seats do. The Fourth of July we
exhaust stars from sparklers in the late

6. twilight. We swoop ovals of white-gold
flame, making quick signatures against
an imploding dark. The five-year-old
girl kisses the young dog goodbye and
chases the quick erratic kitten.
When she returns in a few years as
a tall shy girl, she will come back to
a dignified spreading cat and a
dog ash-gray on the muzzle. Sparklers

7. expel quickly this night of farewell:
If they didn't burn out, they wouldn't
be beautiful. Kurt, may I hazard
an opinion on expansion? Last

winter meetings, the major leagues (already meager in ability, scanty in starting pitchers) voted to add two teams. Therefore minor league players will advance all too quickly,

8. with boys in the bigs who wouldn't have made double-A forty years ago.

Directors of player personnel will search like poets scrambling in old notebooks for unused leftover lines, but when was the last time anyone cut back when he or she could expand? Kurt, I get the notion that you were another who never discarded

9. anything, a keeper from way back.

You smoked cigarettes, in inflation-times rolled from chopped-up banknotes, billions inhaled and exhaled as cancerous smoke. When commerce woke, Men was awake. If you smoked a cigar, the cigar band discovered itself glued into collage. Ongoing life became the material of Kurt Schwittersball.

1 Comment

1. I am compelled to write a response to "The Seventh Inning". I love how Hall creates this amazing weave of themes throughout his poem. With what would ordinarily be disparate topics, he ingeniously combines, blends and shifts back and forth across notions on baseball, sex, water, life, death, etc. Not unlike a Schwitter's collage, he allows the reader to discover a rich flow of associations creatively intertwined.

Thanks for the poem. I am inspired, as a photographer, to accomplish a similar feat visually.

Comment by David Ditman — June 15, 2007 @ [11:43 pm](#)