

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

September 21, 2007

Friday Poem

Filed under: poetry — alecsothblog @ 1:43 am



The Flooded Grave 1998–2000 by Jeff Wall. See details [here](#)

In an interview with [ChicagoPostmodernPoetry.Com](#), Graham Foust is asked to name his poetic influences. I love his answer:

More often than not, these lists get boring rather quickly, perhaps more for the maker than for the reader. I don't know. Am I moved by someone or something that someone might assume wouldn't move me? I've always found Louise Glück to be a fine poet. I love Kelly Clarkson's "Since U Been Gone" and Rick Springfield's "Jesse's Girl." I collect found photographs and the limbs of action figures that have seemed to litter the streets of the places I've lived. But maybe this is all old news.

I emailed Graham and asked him if photography has ever influenced his writing. He sent me the following poem from his first book, *As in Every Deafness*:

THE FLOODED GRAVE (after a photograph by Jeff Wall)

by Graham Foust

In what's become this room
we are hostless
for the most part.

There is infinite glitter.
There is earth.

An open grave,
let's say—not automatically
horrific—or
the not saying "raining"
in what is now this room.

We tune and we fade,
not undetermined upon bloom.

We shatter that way.
We don't and then we do.

Here is another of Graham Foust's excellent poems:

Retarded Artifact

by Graham Foust

Give me reasons not to be
oblivion, irony.
Like something in Wisconsin,
I am all the dirt I know.
Having come to in someone
else's boredom, I'm alive—
and it's an all-new boredom,
a boredom of cathedral
proportion. Empty as folk,
I just make up, make over

everything. Lately, I don't
even want a piece of me.

6 Comments

1. "Retarded Artifact" is an awesome poem! I'm gonna make it my theme poem. I am a furniture salesperson sitting in a currently customerless showroom and feeling like bored dirt. In fact I'm just waiting for another bored person to come in and buy a new lamp or get my help re-doing their living room. It's always nice to hear someone say in a funny and creative way that they too feel like shit, or dirt.

Comment by Brent Clark — September 21, 2007 @ 1:32 pm

2. i'm always surprised when i see a great photoblog like yours, brent... with some very stellar pics... and then read that the photographer is working as a furniture salesperson. i thought those types jobs were held by flickr peeps such as myself... in my case, a computer tech for a roofing company. at least it's friday, i suppose.

Comment by mannydiller — September 21, 2007 @ 2:15 pm

3. Except that I have to work Saturdays! :)

Comment by Brent Clark — September 21, 2007 @ 3:08 pm

4. One of my favorite images combined with such direct poetry.

Its funny, I studied poetry a fair amount in college, and I felt it very distantly. Now I read poetry and it hits me right in the heart. I feel like I've become poetry's target audience in my early middle age. Thanks for bringing it on Alec.

Comment by sean ross — September 21, 2007 @ 3:10 pm

5. "retarded artifact;" is timeless

Comment by robert — September 21, 2007 @ 6:22 pm

6. By the way, thanks for the compliment Manny. If you are related to any successful people in the photo business, please tell them how awesome I am!

Comment by Brent Clark — September 22, 2007 @ 4:24 pm