

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

August 10, 2007

Friday Poem

Filed under: poetry — alecsothblog @ 5:57 am

from "The Congressional Library"

by Amy Lowell

Where else in all America are we so symbolized

As in this hall?

White columns polished like glass,

A dome and a dome,

A balcony and a balcony,

Stairs and the balustrades to them,

Yellow marble and red slabs of it,

All mounting, spearing, flying into color.

Color round the dome and up to it,

Color curving, kite-flying, to the second dome,

Light, dropping, pitching down upon the color,

Arrow-falling upon the glass-bright pillars,

Mingled colors spinning into a shape of white pillars,

Fusing, cooling, into balanced shafts of shrill and interthronging light.

This is America,

This vast, confused beauty,

This staring, restless speed of loveliness,
Mighty, overwhelming, crude, of all forms,
Making grandeur out of profusion,
Afraid of no incongruities,
Sublime in its audacity,
Bizarre breaker of moulds,
Laughing with strength,
Charging down on the past,
Glorious and conquering,
Destroyer, builder,
Invincible pith and marrow of the world,
An old world remaking,
Whirling into the no-world of all-colored light.

5 Comments

1. Cool that you discovered this poem by Amy Lowell. She is so overlooked.

Comment by Linda — August 10, 2007 @ 3:37 pm

2. What a wonderful poem.

Comment by Matt Niebuhr — August 11, 2007 @ 2:10 am

3. thank you, yes... what a wonderful poem.

so apt -

An old world remaking,

Whirling into the no-world of all-colored light.

Comment by mark s — August 11, 2007 @ 6:01 am

4. sublime in its audacity.

cherish...

Comment by mark s — August 11, 2007 @ 6:04 am

5. Unfortunately, the symbolism of this library stretches much further. It would be difficult to find another culture as insular, disconnected and naive as the American one. The Chinese come in second-best.

Comment by PeeWee — August 11, 2007 @ 3:22 pm