

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

October 27, 2006

Friday Poem

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I'm currently visiting Memphis. So much [music](#) about this place, but not a lot of poetry. But [C.D. Wright](#), who went to Memphis State, wrote this poem:

Personals

Some nights I sleep with my dress on. My teeth
are small and even. I don't get headaches.
Since 1971 or before, I have hunted a bench
where I could eat my pimento cheese in peace.
If this were Tennessee and across that river, Arkansas,
I'd meet you in West Memphis tonight. We could
have a big time. Danger, shoulder soft.
Do not lie or lean on me. I'm still trying to find a job
for which a simple machine isn't better suited.
I've seen people die of money. Look at Admiral Benbow. I wish
like certain fishes, we came equipped with light organs.
Which reminds me of a little known fact:
if we were going the speed of light, this dome
would be shrinking while we were gaining weight.
Isn't the road crooked and steep.
In this humidity, I make repairs by night. I'm not one
among millions who saw Monroe's face
in the moon. I go blank looking at that face.
If I could afford it I'd live in hotels. I won awards
in spelling and the Australian crawl. Long long ago.
Grandmother married a man named Ivan. The men called him
Eve. Stranger, to tell the truth, in dog years I am up there.

I also want to share this answer to a question Wright gave in an interview in [Jubilat](#):

Q: You've said, "I'm not a reliable critic, even for my own purposes." Does that unreliability keep you open as a reader, and as a writer?

A: I don't want to shut down. You see a recoiling from the adventure of new writing happening to people, and it's not a place where I want to settle. Also, I remember in some recent interview I talked about coming to love Donald Judd's work. When I was twenty-one I got a job at Park-Bernet Galleries, and pretty soon into the job we had a contemporary art show I did not like one bit. Most of all, I didn't like the work of Dan Flavin, Claes Oldenberg, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns—I had never seen any of that stuff, and it all just looked ridiculous to me. However, over time I found that when I went to a museum I started going toward the new stuff, especially Donald Judd's work, which did nothing except be there, you know. It was cool and beautiful, but it just didn't evoke any references for me, and so I felt like I could be still, could be quiet with just a few copper boxes. And I feel like I look for that in writing too—somewhere I can get a clearing so that I can see something that I haven't seen before. It's very hard to find that clearing.

1 Comment

1. i like this. i like it very much. makes me think of the spaces between lines on a page. some words worth reading, other words best left in space to help the good ones breathe.

Comment by [le glazer](#) — November 3, 2006 @ [10:07 am](#)