

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

February 1, 2007

Friday Poem

Filed under: [poetry](#) — alecsothblog @ 10:40 pm

The other morning I photographed the '[vertical gardener](#)' Patrick Blanc and his partner '[Pascal of Bollywood](#).' Paris was chilly, but their home was a humid paradise of moss, birds and Tropicália. We drank champagne. It was 9:30 in the morning. It made me think of this poem:

Be Drunk

by Charles Baudelaire (Translated by Louis Simpson)

You have to be always drunk. That's all there is to it—it's the only way. So as not to feel the horrible burden of time that breaks your back and bends you to the earth, you have to be continually drunk.

But on what? Wine, poetry or virtue, as you wish. But be drunk.

And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace or the green grass of a ditch, in the mournful solitude of your room, you wake again, drunkenness already diminishing or gone, ask the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock, everything that is flying, everything that is groaning, everything that is rolling, everything that is singing, everything that is speaking. . .ask what time it is and wind, wave, star, bird, clock will answer you: "It is time to be drunk! So as not to be the martyred slaves of time, be drunk, be continually drunk! On wine, on poetry or on virtue as you wish."

8 Comments

1. Alec,

One of the best pieces of this blog is your commitment to updating the Friday Poem. This is a fine work of Charles Baudelaire. It is advice to be understood. I have my drunkenness, you have yours, and I hope it all continues. For the pains of time are too great to take sober.

Ryan

Comment by [Ryan](#) — February 1, 2007 @ [10:56 pm](#)

2. Hi Alec —

— distant relative, also from Minnesota, in LA now, checking in. Lauren Soth's kid, from Northfield, Dad keeps me apprised of your many accomplishments, thought I'd check in on a late night surf...feel free to check over my way some time or drop an email.

Drunk on scenewriting and filmmaking...

Thanks "A Million",

Chris Soth
(rhymes with "both" NOT "moth")
MillionDollarScreenwriting.com

Comment by [Chris SOTH...](#) — February 2, 2007 @ [3:07 am](#)

3. best one so far!
-Daniel, drunk on the smell of fresh cut grass..

Comment by [Daniel Flahiff](#) — February 2, 2007 @ [7:43 pm](#)

4. Alec,

Like the poem. I also wanted to mention a website that I think you would like (assuming you haven't already checked it out). As soon as I stumbled on it, it immediately made me think of Niagara.

<http://www.foundmagazine.com>

Comment by [Dale Cook](#) — February 4, 2007 @ [8:24 am](#)

5. I read a poet's blog who posts a Friday photograph.

Comment by [rob](#) — February 4, 2007 @ [7:03 pm](#)

6. I love the intelligence you bring to everything. How marvelous, a photographer using poetry to make pictures. And it reminds me of my own resolution of the new year: to read more poetry myself. Yummy.

Comment by [Rebecca Cooney](#) — February 4, 2007 @ [8:07 pm](#)

7. Sort of a tinny Baudelaire to me. (The older trans., incidentally, had "high" for "drunk".)

Comment by [Zbs](#) — February 5, 2007 @ [11:29 am](#)

8. Reminds me a bit of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

XXXV

Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean'd, the Secret of my Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live
Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return."

and later...

LV

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house;
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

Comment by [ND Koster](#) — February 5, 2007 @ [1:30 pm](#)