

poppies

By Brad Sears (Sears...Sears...Sears....)

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... I find an objective correlative confounding, like a jumble of illusions—allusions are apt to elude me. So when I attempted to interpret Sears', 'Poppies,' it was not without trials and trepidation. But I love the way 'mud' pervades each stanza: "tomorrow's makeup," "dirt buried," "caked mud" and "the sludge of my muddled life." Yet what really caught my attention was the couplet, "I remember her face as I entered her. / A torrent of exultation reflected in glass eyes..." I have often wondered if those glassy eyes attested to rapture, distance or absence. (Spacing is poet's own.)*

Poppies

9

A surrogate parody
throwing me across the room
kicking childhood from my chest in
blossoming, hemic, sputters and gasps.
Turning to my mother, helping
apply tomorrow's makeup with shovel hook fists.

20

The dirt buried in contorted red valleys
on my best friend's face
as he realized I'd fumbled
the clothing off of our friendship

and laid it bare in the stale motel air.

23

I remember her face as I entered her.

A torrent of exultation reflected in glass eyes
washing away caked mud from her pale figure.

Present

I lay face down in the sludge of a muddied life.

Across my scars I feel a slight nudge, seeking.

A red poppy has embraced, blooming
in the stale grime, bringing vivacity to this waste I call life.

THE POET SPEAKS...*This poem is cathartic for me. I use writing, especially poetry, to work through past trauma and current emotions I may be feeling. When I was involved in social work, we would often talk about metaphorical toolboxes. There are many tools to work through trauma and uncomfortable emotions. My biggest tool happens to be writing. Another tool I'm fond of is reading. If writing is the wrench, reading is the pliers. The idea that someone has gone through similar trauma, grief, or anger as I have has always given me strength to drive forward. It's a small comfort to know we are not alone.*

I like poetry specifically because its easiest for me to get out a short burst of emotion. While emotional writing is possible with any genre, poetry seems to be the most suited for explaining how I feel now. I was reading a lot of Plath when I wrote the initial draft, and I think some of the tone of her writing influenced this piece

AUTHOR BIO: My name is Brad Sears. I live in Jefferson City, Missouri with my wife, 5 cats, and 2 rabbits. I have a degree in English Literature from Columbia College out of Columbia, Missouri. My favorite poets are Wilfred Owen, Marcus Wicker, and Ocean Vuong. In my spare time I garden, ride my motorcycle, and play video games.