

May 12, 2020

One of my favorite photographs, a photo I look at for sure every evening in a kind of ritual, is a photo a friend took of the old brick wall of the apartment building next door to his, the view from his bedroom window, I think his only window, and his bedroom window is just another old paint encrusted ordinary double hung single window and window frame.

Two things make it very special though, if you look closely you can see the shadow ever so vague, more a stain than a clear image of my friend taking the photo, and the ordinary old exposed rough brick wall is glowing because the sun has caught it at just the right angle for a winter day making it kind of spectacular.

My favorite painting in my apartment is a child's drawing in crayon of Van Gogh's **Starry Night** an image of which most of you would be familiar. It was given to me by the young artist now pretty well grown up. I look at it each day in a kind of ritual, too.

The drawing has 14 stars and a bit larger moon very clearly placed in a sky of deep blue/purple darkness with ribbons of lighter blues, and darker greens streaking across the sky.

A lone cypress intersects the painting near the left edge of the drawing and a torn sort of tattered purple cloud, perhaps, leads the viewers eyes and then the viewer out of the painting on the right edge.

Unlike Van Gogh's painting, the night sky in the child artist's hand is not frenzied but not serene either, but alive with a confident energy.

Van Gogh's **Starry Night** was painted from the small unbarred window in the lunatic asylum where he committed himself after he cut off his ear in a state of deep depression. The sky is the sky he saw just before dawn and it was only a whet field in actuality the church and village suggested in the painting were his additions as he struggled to find some semblance of normality in his tumultuous life.

His whole life, he was tormented by many things that, most likely, had their origin in the extremely strict and austere ideas of God and Christ that his

clergyman father had put into his head in his childhood. His paintings which are found to be whimsical and cheery and used to decorate just about everything were from his hand anything but.

We ache to have our times return to the cheery and whimsical that they were for many of us but they are not and for some they are tortuously painful, something that is hard to think about or watch but we need to remember and not allow ourselves to deny their pain. The images are bad now, the lines of cars for food, the unemployment, the loss of life, the grief of so many, even though we may feel and are, indeed, powerless we really cannot forget.

I can only imagine what we would be hearing when I would ask the children, What do we want to ask God to bless our world with this week?

My prayer will be this day when I look at the photo and the drawing will be to ask God for the confident energy to find love in the shadows of the ordinary from the fallow places where we are as we continue this trek into the unknown.

Check out your collection of photos and drawings, I'll be you will find love and beauty create a ritual that returns you to the real without the politics of fear and division.

Peace be with you!