

Everyone loses their perception of reality once in a while, although others live in a dream world all their lives. Adrien Stoutenburg looks into the ideas of what is real and what is fantasy in his poem, Reel One. He explores the idea of how a movie can relate to and affect our lives. He does this through the use of metaphors and vivid images that we can understand in many different ways.

Stoutenburg's first body paragraph describes the movie he and his companion are watching. He seems to get caught up in the moment, captured in the sequence of frames that rush by his face. Every second is a part of him; he can not seem to distinguish between real life and the movies. It seems as though he would rather be in this dream world of action and adventure, than that of his own that may be dull and boring. He describes the movies as, "It was like life, but better" (line 8).

In the second body paragraph, he describes the dullness that he returns to when the movie is over. "but there wasn't much blue in the drifts or corners: just white and more white..." (lines 13-15). It feels that once the movie is gone so is all the excitement in his life, that through the movies he can explore something that he cannot in real life. Stoutenburg or the person he is writing about does not seem to want to live outside of this fantastic dreamscape.

Although Stoutenburg is with his girl friend throughout the whole poem, he does not make mention of her until the second body paragraph, "I held my girl's hand," (line 9). He is so caught up in the movie that he fails to acknowledge her existence. In lines sixteen through eighteen you can feel Stoutenburg's obsession for the movies. Although it is beautiful writing, the image is portrayed that long after he is out of the movie theater he can still hear the sound track, and that only now does it start to fade away.

Stoutenburg's passion leads to a few great things, one, thought that explores the ideas of reality on different levels, but also metaphors that could only get across perceptions of what he saw and heard, with images and sounds that we can relate to in our reality. "guns gleamed like cars and blood was as red as the paint on dancers," (lines 3-5). Stoutenburg's images differ from the movie from those of his real life. Stoutenburg sees the silver screen as "shaking with fire" and real life, "white and more white." He wants to live in the movies because that is where the glamour and color is, unlike his life that seems to be black and white.

Stoutenburg's poem, Reel One, is one that can be read over and over and each time one can find another fascinating thing that they missed the time before. Each time one is reading his poem, they are taken deeper into his world. With his use of metaphors he can entice you into thinking he is in one place and really be in another. Although Reel One is only eighteen lines, it describes fully the fascination one can find in movies, and the excitement one could be missing in real life.

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