

Seth Grahame-Smith's Creativity

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Anne Rice's books were enjoyable and well written. I read a couple of them and appreciated her visual imagery, fantasy and imagination about vampirism. But I found Seth Grahame-Smith's books better in those regards. His genre is slightly different than Rice's. His is alternate history and he accomplishes it impeccably.

With his education in English and filmmaking, he is wired as a screenwriter, but began his career with novels first. Without any formal background in history, he writes in a screenwriter's visual way. I found his descriptive writing level even higher than Rice.

For me, I have always liked reading and writing about ideas, whatever the venue or genre.

Here is an excerpt from the early chapters of his latest book, *The Last American Vampire*:

Henry had wandered America in the years after Abe's fatal leap, watching with a sort of detached fascination as the young country rose from the ashes, brushed itself off, and began to move west by way of iron and ink. The purchase of Alaska in 1867; the golden spike of the first transcontinental railroad two years later. America had looked inward. It had gone to war with itself to decide what kind of nation it was going to be. And with that decision firmly and finally made, it pulled itself together and soldiered on, emerging from its near-death experience with a new vitality. A new spirit of progress.

Henry had marked his three hundredth year during America's Civil War. Three hundred years of motion. Of taking new names, making new homes, adapting to the world as it changed around him. In 1888, with the war long over and the greatest man he'd ever known twenty-three years in his grave, he moved again. This time he swam against the westward tide of progress, leaving the Midwest and settling in New York City.

I'd heard it said that "when a man is tired of moving, he moves to New York, and the movement comes to him." I supposed it was partially this. The need to relax in the anonymity of large numbers. To let the movement of the world come to me for a change. And I suppose I also liked the thought of being closer to the headquarters of the Union. But looking back, more than anything, I think I wanted to be farther away from America. It had been a long relationship, fraught with discovery and upheaval and loss. To me, it was a nation of ghosts, you understand, whether it be Richmond or St. Louis or New Orleans, there were a hundred faded memories. The faces of a hundred friends lost to time.

Henry's home in St. Louis was put up for sale and a new one procured in New York. Arrangements were made via letter and cable. Furnishings were bought. A staff hired,

sight unseen, based on recommendation from other well-to-do New Yorkers, human and vampire alike. Clothing, keepsakes, books, and artwork were packed up and shipped from St. Louis in advance.