

Rusty Nail, Pearl Onion + Two

By

Robert Beveridge

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...In 'Abyss,' I picture Mister Beveridge formulating the first lines in his mind and running for a pen and paper before they escape him, in just this order. (I think he might have made it in time.) "Just a touch / a kiss / the abyss / that is you . . . the wildflowers / ask your name / every night . . ." From here it reads like a Georgia O'Keefe, members only, blossoms bloom and pedals fall. 'Rusty Nail, Pearl Onion' is short, bent, twisted and layered. And, who hasn't been invited to the 'Sandworms' for dinner? (spacing is poet's own.) HS*

Rusty Nail, Pearl Onion

Sailors took you
for a dockside courtesan
as you searched
for your lost Akita.

You reflected, perhaps,
you might wear clothes

next time.

Abyss

Just a touch
a kiss

the abyss
that is you
flows over me
whispers me
into its red depths

the wildflowers
ask your name
every night

but you only yell
“grow, dammit!”
out the window

and they do

in the wind
that falls forever here
you kiss me

and I fall as well, grow
like the wildflowers

in the garden

Sandworms

I hate the part
where they invite you over
to their house

and they made dinner
and of course it all
tastes like silica

they're never any good at charades

but their singing voices
are impeccable

THE POET SPEAKS: *I'm not a big fan of poets, at readings, introducing each poem. So I do it up front with one-liners and leave it to the audience's imagination to hook up the introductions with the proper (or improper, whichever makes them feel better) poems. One line I use every single time is "One of these poems is 100% based on a true story. One of three poems is based on a 100% false story." That is also the case here. It's unfortunate that it's much easier to tell which is which here than it usually is. The other poem is "Sandworms," and about that one I will say "One of these poems is based on a story I wish were 100% true." (The sandworms in question first appeared in a Frank Herbert novel. He who controls the party games controls the universe.)*

I've spent a great deal of time thinking about the efficacy and impact of poetry at a time like this, when depression and anxiety feel less like mental and emotional issues and more a reasonable reaction to the events surrounding us daily. And I've questioned it, as I've questioned where there's anything the averages 99%er can do to make things...not better, but less oppressive. I'm not sure we can, save maybe for a scattered handful of people. Maybe just for ourselves. But it seems important to keep trying.

AUTHOR BIO: Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in Cordite Poetry Review, Stardust Haiku, and GAS: Poetry, Art, and Music, among others.

