

5 poems

by kenneth pobo

Poetry editor Hezekiah writes: I have no idea what DWORNS are but I just love this poem and “the original / oatmeal people.” “I say Thanksgiving / comes in November. He says he is thankful / for decay.” You can’t pick TRILLIUMS in Ontario unless it’s a poem. Fleas are much obliged to publish Pobo’s well-deserved poetry. HS (Spacing is poet’s own.)

DWORNS

I’m a king, I rumble,
and I rule the original
oatmeal people. I love them,
as much as a king can love.
Which isn’t much. My dark red
coat with a gold lining
makes me look like I’ve been set
on fire.

Sometimes people bow and I bow back—
then we go about our days planning
to rob sexual banks. I’m good
for one thing: I protect everyone
from the dworns. Nobody knows
what they are, but I’m ready for them.

I stuff poems in my gun.
Explosive, they can’t kill,
but they can make the dworns
think twice.

DULCET TONES SAYS HE CARRIES NOVEMBER IN HIM

He looks all moony and summer relaxed,
torn blue shorts, flip flops,
and short sleeved shirt with a picture
of a barred owl on the back. He says
I shouldn't be taken in—
he carries November in him.

I might take a chill if I get too close.
No one gets too close. He doesn't allow it.
He waits for hummingbirds to return,
but they flee from cold. I say Thanksgiving
comes in November. He says he is thankful
for decay.

It dresses better than he does.
And tells no lies.

TRILLIUMS

The trilliums have just
come into bloom,
raising little white flags
above brown fern fronds.

Why raise flags of surrender?
Each conquered winter.
These should be victory flags.

They see summer carrying
a large scythe. They know
they can't get out of the way.

They wait. They ask pebbles
for help, knowing how silent
pebbles are, how they
don't listen,
even to the Earth.

SOMETIMES I STUMBLE

upon a Virginia bluebell,
right where it's supposed to be,
still a surprise—

I had forgotten how heaven
sometimes comes in
near the ankles.

This flower,
a blue key
that opens the door
to spring.

ON THE PORCH

My rational friend Zondervan says
I shouldn't believe in dragons.
I'd find his argument persuasive—
except a dragon breathes fire
next to him. I ask him, Zondervan,
aren't you a little warm
from the dragon's fire?
He says it's not fire.
It must be a heat wave.

I invite the dragon to live with me.
She stays on the porch.
When Zondervan comes over,
we sit on the glider, drink iced tea.

The dragon, named Clara,
falls asleep to the buzz
of carpenter bees
just beyond the screen.

THE POET SPEAKS: *I've been writing poetry since I was fifteen, heavily influenced by Tommy James and the Shondells and T. Rex. I'm sixty-five now, so that adds up to half a century of poetry writing. I love it as much now as I did then. One reason I read poetry is that it helps me to see better, more clearly—and in fresh ways. Poems call me back to them, to reacquaint, become great friends all over again. Different poets influence me at different times. Lucille Clifton. Tomas Tranströmer. DH Lawrence. Anne Sexton. Well, it's a long list.*

The poems in this set vary in what inspired them. "Dworns" is a reference I found in a T. Rex song from 1970 called "Dragon's Ear." I wanted to write a poem using that strange word. I like

poems that are small character studies, like photographs found in a drawer. “Dulcet Tones” and “On The Porch” are in that vein. The other two are garden poems. The garden is a never-ending source of poetry for me. Gardens aren’t just “sweet” or “sentimental.” Struggle is what makes a garden.

AUTHOR’S BIO: *Kenneth Pobo has a new book forthcoming from Assure Press called Uneven Steven. His work has appeared in: Hawaii Review, The Queer South Anthology, Nimrod, Mudfish, and elsewhere.*