

3 POEMS

By Stephen Okawa

Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes: Here are some words from Okawa I couldn't resist: "the pain like when megan romano kicked me / in my little twelve year old balls" "play pretend tea time with parents" "most / of your children / have worked through / the complexes you gave them." Bad news cannot be uttered in honeyed voices... "my fists've been doing all the screaming for me / lately" I'm starting to prefer poets without punctuation, it appeals to my lack of syntax...HS (Spacing is poet's own.)

i did two tours of childhood, 1985th infantry

flashes of barely developed photos of me as a boy
invade my mind's eye like a trojan hobby horse
the pain like when megan romano kicked me
in my little twelve year old balls
the agony marching through me
as if my torso were rice fields
her boots attached to 'Merican GIs
napalm carpet bombing my GI-tract
all along mekong miasma of nerve endings
storming a cortex horizon going dim
a perfect place to stash these photos
banish megan's rejection
play pretend tea time with parents
who scold me for putting my elbows

on the good grey matter
which they boast is a family heirloom

bad news

this is the day the world forgets you.
the last day you'll be thought of.
from this day forth
only the source will know your name.
the source has known you
from the very beginning
and you'll hit it off like
old friends.
i know you're curious:
is there anything you can do
right now
to stop this?
i'm sorry.
you can't influence that side

any more.

mostly

you're just brought up around

your birthday time

or holidays. most

of your children

have worked through

the complexes you gave them.

you have zero affect

on them

their lives

the world at all.

oh dear.

you're getting sad.

this always happens.

what's that? can i

sing you a song?

ok. but my voice isn't so good.

i mostly use it

for delivering

bad news.

anymore

my fists've been doing all the screaming for me

lately

as my mouth has been walled-up,

the soldiers afraid to go over lip-trenches

anymore.

and speaking of anymore

how come you don't see dead things

anymore?

i remember seeing dead birds around my house

smelling something awful,

roadkill in the streets for weeks,

family funerals a few times a year.

but where are all the dead ducks?

i counted 20 live ducks

at the pond once
and have never seen a dead one.

i've seen ducks with one eye
or half a beak,
ducks with no legs
ducks half-eaten
and ducks with jobs

but never dead ducks.

i'm growing suspicious of these things
as i get older.

i'm feeling less and less human
and more like a dead duck,

all unseen and closer
to "anymore".

THE POET SPEAKS: *A lot of my inspiration comes from actually missing old pains from a disturbed childhood --- like being roundhoused in my groin --- in that these kinds of pains are preferable to being lonely or undone by indifference. Native American poet, Adrian C. Louis --- who was able to speak starkly about a hard life and a harder non-life --- and beat poet Richard Brautigan --- who could toe the line between autobiographical and pure whimsicality --- are responsible for any stylistic or thematic similarities. Mostly, poetry is group therapy for me. When I read, it's like seeking out others who see the world as I do, taking some solace in knowing I'm not alone in feeling a certain way. When I write, I become the one sending out the distress signals.*

AUTHOR'S BIO: *Stephen Okawa is a garbage man from Chest Nut Hill, MA. One day, he's going to throw it all out. His work has appeared in The Main Street Rag, WordEater, Breadcrumb Scabs, Boston Poetry Magazine, Madswirl and others.*