

4 p **O**ems....(4)...FO {4} R...P.O.E.M.S....(4!!!)...poems

B **y** Ed Aher **N**

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... I love the idea of verse inspired and written to exercise, pacify, quell or simply acknowledge another's ire for its author. In 'The Lock Out,' Ed Ahern does just this. He is stern, unapologetic (scarcely a modicum of masked contrition) trading "the gravity / of my offense" for the "clenched endurance of his hate" Isn't that great? "I love the last two lines: "Such unyielding hate is powerful / but I suspect not comforting." Better, bettered bested is a superlative, gnashing-of-teeth declension. Next we retreat and charge ahead with a most erotic onanistic dalliance: 'The Rinsing Curse,' Soiling Alert—I find these flanking lines especially resonate, coursing through veins: "My sweat glands dialed to gush" ... "I am haunted by my waters." Oddly enough, the proceeding poem, 'The Geyser,' is unrelated to the preceding, other than the bursting of pipes, but it's a delight...ending in an aged, elderly, adolescence act. 'Gray Days' may spark the flint of your flinching frontier heart, so long as you're not tuned-up to the second amendment...*

The Geyser

A sewer became a fountain yesterday.
Geysering dirty water into an underpass.
Cars stopped and turned back.
But, big wheeled and high carriaged,
I drove through, water washing my bottom.
It was a foolhardy action
But an adolescent sense of achievement.
I'm apt to do it again.

Gray Days

Gray days suit me.
They blend well with my hate
Of most of those around me.
Choked back on sunny afternoons,
surging like vomit in the rain.
I'd like to take my gun for a walk
and entertain myself with neighbors.

The Lock Out

I know a man who's hated me
for almost twenty years.
For reasons important to another
I've tried and failed to create
a neutrality that allows for us
to coexist socially.

Of what I did there is no doubt
and his repugnance has held firm.
The clenched endurance of his hate
speaks perhaps to the gravity
of my offense, or perhaps
to his emotional obdurance.

In either case I was one with
several others whom he hates
with equal vigor and longevity,
and sometimes for less reason.
Such unyielding hate is powerful
but I suspect not comforting.

The Rinsing Curse

My sweat glands dialed to gush
when puberty crept in,
and ever since, vigorous activity
produces tidal flushes.
Dancing, running, working
and, yes, that too,
slime me up like melting popsicle.
The marginal benefits
limited to wrestling while slippery
and hug avoidance.
Even desert broil is washed out by
my glandular hydrants.
I am haunted by my waters.

THE POET SPEAKS:

I came to fiction writing late, at sixty-seven, and poetry later still, at seventy-one. I was reviewing poetry for an ezine, and felt that, bad as I might be, I should be able to write poems as marginal as those already getting published.

As it turned out I could, but I realized that if I was going to be good rather than adequate, I needed training. I joined three poetry groups and started reading through books on poetry, all of which I'm still doing. I may not be writing great poems, but I'm now writing better ones.

And I was liberated. I came to poetry so late in life that I knew there would never be decades of artistic development and recognition. This has let me write what I want- formal poetry, haiku, shape poems, free verse- whatever, on whichever theme or emotion I was touched by.

I just glanced through seven single spaced pages of poem titles, mostly all published, in one case eleven times. Some bad or indifferent, some good, and a few I can pat myself on the ass about.

Writing poetry and fiction are symbiotic for me. If I found myself stuck in turgid I can switch off, write a story or poem, and return to my prior work with (usually) better writing. Another liberation from a late start, I don't have to have a narrow focus.

My fiction tells stories, but my poetry hopefully captures moods and experiences in a way that can be shared. The poems tend toward either childlike delight or sardonic pessimism and are probably a clearer view into my gnarly persona than my fiction.

I am content in my words

AUTHOR BIO: Ed Ahern resumed writing after forty odd years in foreign intelligence and international sales. He's had over three hundred stories and poems published so far, and six

books. Ed works the other side of writing at Bewildering Stories, where he sits on the review board and manages a posse of nine review editors.

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