

5 (Five) Poems

By Kendra Nuttall

Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes: We marvel on 'Capernaum Road' "unsticking soggy swimsuit from skin, / shivering waddles in sloshing flip-flops," The universality of the froth and nonsense of life. Nuttall is soothingly villanesque. I share her love for lists making and taxonomy—just so as they are not to-do lists. 'Don't Feed the Ducks' is a bittersweet treatise. And just feast your eyes on all the Davids... (Spacing and font size are poet's own.) HS

Bidding War

They don't tell you that gambling happens
outside of Vegas, in every suburb,
every grandmother's azalea beds
and white picket fence:
twenty and thirty-somethings indebted
to student loans and tradition
attempting to buy their first
(and most likely last)
home.

It's a war out there,
at least they told me that.
Now do the math.

It has potential.
It has good bones.
I have good bones too, but
that won't stop the bulldozer.
I have good bones too, but
your best bid is due at noon.

I have good bones too, but.

Capernaum Road

What I hate most about swimming
is getting out of the pool —
unsticking soggy swimsuit from skin,
shivering waddles in sloshing flip-flops,
eating sandwiches with pruned fingers,
cold water dripping from damp hair,
all the while surrounded
by the stench of chlorine and hint of pee.

This is to say, my childhood bathroom had carpet.
This is to say, I don't trust boomers.

My childhood home had an unfinished basement
I was afraid of and a backyard with raspberry bushes.
My childhood home had a bright turquoise bedroom
and a single broken orange tile in the kitchen.
My childhood home had a peeling red deck
and couch held together by duct tape.

My childhood home is listed on Zillow,
sterile and staged like an Ikea showroom.
They've gone for a modern farmhouse look,
popular with every suburban conservative family.
I'm sure it will sell quick, after all,
location, location, location,

yet I can't help but remember
what Christmas morning looked like
in the living room when my childhood home was lived in.

12 Observations While Hiking

1. At some point, graffiti turns into history.
2. Rattlesnakes are anti-social.
3. Fellow hikers only say hi if you make eye contact.
4. Don't make eye contact.
5. Little dogs have something to prove.
6. Big men have something to prove.
7. Squirrels are adorable.
8. Stretching is important.
9. Sunscreen is important.
10. I will never be able to run up a mountain.
11. Will I ever be history?
12. I wonder.

Don't Feed the Ducks

says the sign,
but toddlers can't read; they can only toddle.
Their parents can read but would rather not.

Therefore, our neighborhood pond's once polite
ducks are now plump and happy to stalk
innocent anglers for bread.

There's one duck, however, (call him ugly duckling
if you need a fairytale) who doesn't follow
the zombied flock. I watch him limp

towards the shade of a tree, alone,
abandoned, resigned to his fate of unfavorite.
Every time I think of the cruelty of humans

I remember our animal friends aren't always nicer,
though they're far more cute. At least I know
if I were hurt, a doctor would take care of me (for a fee.)

If I were hurt,
you'd be there with breakfast kolaches
to help me feel better.

If I were hurt,
I wouldn't be alone,
no matter how lonely pain can be.

David

1.

David is everywhere:
in the classroom, in the office,
in my house, in my head,
sipping coffee incessantly,
on the sidewalk jogging shirtless,
in the Prius looking smug,
in the Ford spilling sauce,
eating Chick-fil-a (for the sauce, not the politics),
on the TV screen — both interviewer and interviewee,
in court — both judge and jury,
in park as owner,
in park as dog,
nickname: Dave,
AKA Grilling Master,
AKA World's #1 Dad,
AKA Mr. Cool.

2.

David Arquette
David Beckham
David Bowie
David Carradine
David Copperfield
David Duchovny
David Foster Wallace
David Hasselhoff
David Lee Roth
David Letterman
David Morrissey
David Ortiz
David Schwimmer
David Sedaris
David Spade
David Tennant
David, slayer of Goliath.

3.

David is 5 feet and 11.5 inches tall.
He is usually white.
He is lactose intolerant, but cheese pizza is life.

The Office is his favorite TV show.
Check out his podcast.

4.

I have a few David's of my own:

David, the target of elementary school bullying.

David, everyone's boyfriend at some point or another.

David, the conservative lawyer who reminds me of my father.

David, the Target cashier.

David, my YA novel protagonist.

David, 1 in 28 Americans.

David, my husband.

THE POET SPEAKS: My poems are inspired by everyday topics that I put my own perspective on, like simply going on a hike or walk in the park, as well as unique experiences in my life, and topics that people can relate to like love, aging, grief, loss, etc. Poetry is important to me because it helps me cope and make sense of the world. Without poetry, I'm not sure I could make it through 2020!

AUTHOR'S BIO: Kendra Nuttall is a copywriter by day and poet by night. Her work has appeared in, *Spectrum*, *Capsule Stories*, and *Chiron Review*, among others. She lives in Utah with her husband and poodle. Her debut book, *A Statistical Study of Randomness*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press. Find her online at kendranuttall.com