

# THREE POEMS

By Ben Ellingson

*Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes: I was truly moved by this uber-verse, beyond my universe, in forward and reverse. Ellingson, Ellingson, Ellingson! Repetition is a poor man's trope. His Bio almost rivals, or at least echoes, a thirst...for his work. 'Take a humbuck toothy-grin ride' 'Banana cream insubordination' 'or a scissors made of cloth.' And what will children need to breathe...? Words that confound, astound, and strung together, transcend the profound. I'm only part-way through. If you can't trust me by now, JUST have a peek. Take a glimpse, read on and long for more...What if Cale is as clever?(Spacing is poet's own) HS*

## Therapy

red bicameral ligature  
spontaneous fizz membrane  
accordingly dope snuck  
freefall clawhammer  
organization  
below smooth melody infrastructure  
galvanizing inappropriate impromptu  
aging spyglass just prior to  
the great storm of confusion  
that batters legs and maims  
inarticulate parishioners  
scavenging for mushrooms  
in their filthy dirt.

Take a humbuck toothy-grin ride

to Tillamook County  
in an economical compact car  
amid concerns about  
the subsonic remnants  
that came in through the bathroom.

The pulverizing drive  
uplifts spirits across the parking lot  
while safety pins evolve to  
cover the land and one local pie  
crust becomes particularly good  
at helping others discuss their feelings.

If only for jigsaw puzzles.  
Banana cream insubordination  
drags on for hours  
with the tambourine too heavy to lift,  
a jar full of scorpions tips  
and the locomotive turns to art.

It's probably time to relax  
and take it all in,  
too much process,  
but thrilling in an analogous fashion,  
like a whisper in a megaphone  
or a scissors made of cloth.

The children will need things.  
Shoes, shirts.

Love, breath.  
Some will require bulldozers  
and others dragons, while  
yet another absconds to the attic  
with a human doll  
and begins to hatch a plan.

## **An Opening**

tree leaves sour infantile menageries  
of order and civility, seething across the river,  
speaking, glowing, heaving like the belly of God,  
churning through the light, bristling  
like a muscular cornered animal  
preparing to pounce and dismantle  
human industry like a child  
enthusiastically brushing aside  
monuments of carefully stacked  
blocks, rendering the alphabet  
to a rubble heap  
ready for the re-structuring.

Messages have been sent,  
invitations issued,  
warnings proclaimed,

through dropped seeds and pollen grains,  
wordless and powerful like  
the ox in the china shop.

It feels like an end because it's the beginning.  
You've found yourself because you felt lost.  
The shrill whine  
of a diamond drill driving deeper.  
Relief release.  
Purpose anew.

Birds swoop in prancing flight, alighting on branches  
to sing among the fluttering leaves. The sun emerges  
from behind a cloud just as a squirrel  
scampers past along an electrical line.  
A skunk hides in the flower bed  
and the dirt trail leading to the Nature Center  
is closing in from each side with foliage.

You pass, tickled by sticky blossoms,  
breathing fully in the teeming abundance  
of light and life, proceeding down the path,  
wondering how rigmarole bladderclamps  
stung igneous fishtails  
among candid showering drenched feet wet...

## **Phrenetic Smile**

sampleclay jimbleflig  
enorato emmulion  
coldahmelie insplacious  
hullibloog tross jot  
ting down the sound  
of melons vibrating  
at the frequency of water drops  
strung across the hollow  
body and up the neck  
of an old abandoned instrument  
smoothed in ageless bedlam  
across the Euphrates  
up nine flights of stairs  
and dropped on the floor  
at the side of your bed.

Tricky adjustments  
call for an altimeter,  
three rolls of gauze  
and the moisture  
in the back of your lover's throat  
extracted minglejoin  
emphlason biljingoy  
mallahaxelon jivoombeloy  
of klont.

Don't be surprised if you're  
startled by a knock at the door  
in the middle of the process.  
That's what the third  
roll of gauze is for.

Like the spilled glass  
of milk that runs  
across the table,  
under everyone's plate,  
over the edge,  
drizzling benignly down to the floor,  
following a crevice  
to ride the gentle slope  
of the room over to the trimboard  
and then SNAP, gone,  
out of sight

into the land of rodents

who hold firelit banquets  
inside the walls  
of your night,  
conjuring apparitions  
from the moistened dust  
and then eating eating  
devouring the sweet  
mixture until collapse  
and wild dreaming  
of ixcantybloo miramdella  
fallablee donginome  
de skallbiromp.

Time to check your altitude  
and secure the final substance.

**THE POETS SPEAKS:** *Back in the mid-1990's, when I was in my early twenties, I lived with a friend who attended the University of Iowa Law School. One night, while studying, he jokingly asked me if I knew the meaning of an obscure legal term called The Rule in Shelley's Case. Funny thing is, I'd been reading some Percy Shelley during the preceding days and was able to catch him off guard by quoting the last line from A Defence of Poetry. "Yes" I said. "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."*

*That may be taken as a cute and harmless reference to an artist's dictates over the realm of his or her own imagination, but I suspect it meant more to Czeslaw Milosz when he asked "What is poetry which does not save Nations or people? / A connivance with official lies, / A song of drunkards whose throats will be cut in a moment".*

*A few nights ago, my wife and I sat up late discussing the new background I'd installed on our living room television,*

*a painting called One: Number 31 by Jackson Pollock. I explained that I'd put it there to remind me daily of the question so pressing on my mind: What would a poetic expression be like if it had the same dynamic, non-representational approach as Pollock's paintings?*

*In the "West", The Arts have traveled a long and fascinating Road to Abstraction since the onset of the 20th Century. I try to follow that path, and where there is no trail, I make a little stack of words to mark a new one, just in case it leads somewhere interesting, or useful. My work is often messy, and sometimes to the chagrin of my wife, I even surrender to using clichéd phrases.*

*But out here on the Periphery, you use whatever's available in the moment. And sometimes it takes more than a red wheel barrow.*

**BIO:** *: After years of wild exploits in Santa Fe that included earning a Master's Degree in Eastern Classics, a career as a high-end leather craftsman, a little western fashion modeling, and endless late nights thinking hard at the Cowgirl Hall of Fame, Ben Ellingson was rescued by his amazing wife Amanda and moved on to become the eCommerce Director for artist and storyteller Brian Andreas and his former company StoryPeople. Ben, Amanda, and their now-teenage son Cale ultimately settled in a little house by a river in Montpelier, Vermont, where they calmly enjoy the flow of water and words.*