

T H R E E P O E M S

Michael Basinski



The Poetry Collection is proud to celebrate National Poetry Month with the publication of Michael Basinski's *Three Poems*, the seventeenth in a series featuring the work of poets living in Buffalo.

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THREE POEMS

Michael Basinski

NUMBLES

If a bird flies into your house, someone will die.
If a dog howls, someone is dead.
If you drop a fork, a ghost will visit.
And if there is hot wind, a ghost popped-out her eye.
And cold, she popped her eye out.
If the cold sweeps by, it's a figment as the refrigerator door,
opens.
If you lose your keys, she will return.
If a song enters your head, he is dead.
If it remains, he remains.
If it is involuntary, love, they say, you will be late.
If you fall.
If you recall.
♪ Ding Dong, the bells are gonna chime.
If you do not burn your Palm Sunday palms, while asleep, a
black cat will bite
your Adam's apple.
If of is if I is I if I if.
If you drop a piece of pumpernickel, a soul will fall.
If she contrives a child at the window, DO NOT touch her
teeth.
And they can see and they can hear, them, conceive
A stoma through which they sing, hear, Polish
Christmas carols:
♪ Dzisiaj w Betlejem, dzisiaj w Betlejem
♪ Wesola nowina
♪ Że Panna czysta, że Panna czysta
♪ Porodziła Syna.
And touch each other, form each sound with the sand, of
letters.
If a cabbage leaf is her left finger, don't eat with your fingers.

If colors pour forth fountain from the mountains of his
 mouth, he believes the
 poems of Keats will bring back his deceased parakeet.
And if awake, it is before her walking, away.
If she waits in the basement by the Maytag, no longer.
If his lips are pinched, frying eggs, bacon at the kitchen stove,
 time fried.
Is for only was.
Time fries.

CHEEKTOWAGA BEE: POLICE BLOTTER

Begin with Yeti sounds (his poetry's totem voice)

Sunday, Aug. 2.

Just after 2:30 a.m. lovers were advised on Harlem Road.

Wila, Wila, dancing in my mind vague outlines of a charmed car, Buick forest green, tangled.

O my haunt, in her dark charm, Persephone's act: to sleep sunken slumber, more than a third of my life, away, perchance to dream.

Take:

1 tsp coarse salt

½ oz rosemary

1 oz rose's petals

1 oz valerian

3 pieces of moonstone ((Na,K)AlSi₃O₈)

Glass bowl, bowl over

Plumbing tongue.

Bring me quiet

Bring me peace

Ease my dreams

Nightmares cease

Pillow pollen.

His ghost said: I am a poet, you know.
Her ghost said:
Well, she didn't say nothin, pissed off, my fault.

Bit by bite
 Night
 Top
 Pop
Gasolina shop
Skop cup
 Cop

Bring me quiet
Bring me peace
Ease my dreams
Nightmares cease

SINGING ALLIGATORS

Basinski, could you tell our readers who in the realm of the poem has been your greatest influence?

M. Pernelet, for sure, I mean his poem, "Singing Alligators." It's a masterpiece. You see, back in 1882, Pernelet gathered fourteen alligators from the Louisiana swamps and some of Sobek's sweet crocodiles from ol' Egypt's hot Nile.

It cost him a soul's fortune, an' it was all his time and he could have been, you know, owned a pizza shop or worked for Mutual of Omaha. But day in and day out, he labored, himself for himself, like Odin in the tree, with nets and stuff he caught those leathery, logy lizards. It was a huge personal risk. But, so what, he had a vision, an' come Hell or high water his ensemble of reptiles was gunna be The Rolling Stones of the animal kingdom.

So, Pernelet worked more than twenty years to mold the saurians into a chorus, like the Mormon Tabernacles. At first he could only get them to take food from his hands, which were covered in scars. But he never lost a hand like Lon Chaney Jr. in *The Alligator People*. But he did lose two of his fingers. O well, Keats and Poe were missing fingers, I think, at least or maybe it was Ginsberg?

Anyway, it was just a punishment for his falling in love, unrequited, and for his subsequent drinking. He felt he had to suffer for his sulky teenage passion insatiable ragging need. It cost him decades, agony, dragging the cross up the hill, and dipping his toes in acid but then: results.

He would get into the saurian tank with his fourteen reptiliforms and conduct his own compositions of choral beautiful discordant and blood curdling strange marvelous pure poetry. Here, let me offer this sample:

Yerp, YERP, yerp, deep growl, all GROWL, yerp erp, yerp, urp, deep growl, faaaaaaa, low boom, boom in B flat, a boom BOOM, BOOM, urp, yerp high pitch yerp, yerp, Boom boom boom boom, grunt, grunt, gruntyerp boomyerp yerp, croak, yercroak, hissssssss, all HISSSSSSS, boom, deep growl, booming boom like a sonic boom, various tuba sounds, yerp, low boom, growl hissssss, all HisssSSSSSSS, cough, rumbling bellow, YERP, deep bellow, deep growl, growl echo and yodel, and various monster noises.*

*For solo, or better, choral performance. Realize the phrases in sound, sound words, soundy noise the score, sneak the word crap into the composition if desired, and do onomatopoeia. Listen and orchestrate. Improvise. For variable duration.

People in general, critics and grad students thought that the gators and crocs were just roaring, that Pernelet's music was an assault on their ears, and they shuddered and trembled. Some heard the word crap in the poem and some went into a shock and threw themselves to the floor and writhed, and some left the auditorium, and they never bought Pernelet's books of poetry. Later they just shook their heads after eating

their Chinese food. Pernelet knew that they based worth on the endless repetition of forms and, you know, same old, same old. He didn't care. He was content in his own temple of lost love. And, then he died, laughing.

William Blake's ghost sang:

“Come live and be merry, and join with me,

To sing the sweet chorus of ‘Ha, ha, he!’”

About the Author

Just outside of Buffalo, New York, Michael Basinski lives a little past the airport with his wife, the artist Ginny O'Brien. His recent books are: *The Blob* (Model City Books, 2021) and *Tub Bunny* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2020). He continues to pick up where he left off.

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