

Kenneth Pobo

Go Gentle If You Need To

Mom in the hospital,
a breathing device shoved into her throat.
Only hours left.

Dylan Thomas told his father
to rage against the dying of the light.
If mom wanted to go, needed to go,
she should go.

Some may need to rage,
hold onto breath even if dark
creeps into the room and the lungs
give up. Others may need to
let go, let go.

We can hold their hand,
say we love them.
It may not be much.
It may be everything.

Porch Party

Several Tang Dynasty poets
Come over for a porch party.
It might get raucous.

They may loathe being called
up from the Afterlife
to visit an American suburb—
we have no mountain streams
though our mall has a fancy gym
called The Edge. Sometimes
I think I'm slipping off the edge

of America, nothing to break
my fall. Even poetry
can't do that though it will try.

My Tang friends stay less
than an hour.
They seem happy to go home.
Li Po speaks for them all when he says
"Here's the moon.
We hope it covers the wine."

Dream Control

Last night I went to bed listening to
Eydie Gorme which usually makes
me relax. I dreamed of being lost
in a terrible storm. A friend turned blue
and drowned. Buildings became poisonous snakes
circling around me. City Hall got tossed
against a department store's breaking door.
My fifth grade teacher fell dead on the floor—

Ms. M, my favorite. I decided
to pitch Eydie--I can't risk a new flood.
Maybe I'll watch a rerun or a weird
movie like The Monkees fab flop called *Head*.
No more nightmares that cover me in mud,
my pillow a rowboat that disappeared.

Kill for It

A stray bullet memory
shatters my calm—Tom K flat out
saying "I'm going to kill you,"
He called me a faggot,
whatever that meant—
I guessed kids like Tom K
were happy to kill for it.

I started taking strange routes
home from Jackson Junior High,
named for a man who created
the Trail of Tears.

I still feel marked,
millions of Tom K's
more than willing
to finish the job.

Optimister

He's terribly terribly excited
about the future--it will be tossing
the moon basketball through
a star hoop and ending up in
a space garden, clean underwear
pressed by angels. Death
will disappear like pollen. War?
That was so twentieth century.
Climate change, yes, it's real,
but 8 billion people will hug
the Arctic close.

He left me pooped. Someone
I love said hope is that thing
with feathers.
She's right.
It has to fly away.

About the Poet

Kenneth Pobo has a new book out (prose poetry) from Clare Songbirds Publishing House called *The Atlantis Hit Parade*. Forthcoming from Duck Lake Books is *Dindi Expecting Snow*. His work has appeared in: *The Humanist*, *World Literature Today*, *Indiana Review*, *Amsterdam Review*, and elsewhere.