**Dandelion Wars**

*By Liam Anderson*

I gaze upon the army:

hundreds of yellow heads.

Although they stand just three inches tall,

I know they are deadly.

I draw my sword from my sheath.

I, King Lord Sir Mr. Al Bob, take no prisoners.

As the head pops off the first man,

I smile a mean smile, then glare at my next target.

After a wild battle scream,

head number two sails through the air.

I'm on a roll.

I throw my sword high in the air to show off my skills,

only to have it land on my foot.

I lie on the lawn, pretending to be dead.

"They'll never guess this," I whisper with a grin.

Then I jump up, grab my sword,

and put on my best pose.

I can tell they're shaking in their shoes.

I begin to hum my war song,

emphasizing a note whenever a head flies.

I, King Lord Sir Mr. Al Bob, take no prisoners.

Finally, the battle is over.

I give the falling bodies my signature look--

frightening frown, eyes narrowed, ears back--

accompanied by a short grunt as I exit on my steed.

I, King Lord Sir Mr. Al Bob, take no prisoners.

Now

I watch my little brother kill dandelions

with Mother's broom,

hum Wishbone's theme song,

and ride away on a tree branch.

I shake my head and think,

"What the heck are you doing?"

But then I remember the dandelion wars,

how I thought I was tough

when I popped off the head of a weed.

And I miss it.

So I throw on a jacket

and some shoes,

grab a broom,

and head outside to join Eoin for a taste of my childhood.

I, King Lord Sir Mr. Al Bob, still take no prisoners.

**Step-by-Step Poetry Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | What do the words of the title suggest to you? What literal meaning is presented in the title? What figurative meaning do the words possess? | | |
| **Paraphrase** | Translate the poem in your own words. What is the poem about? | | |
| **Figurative Meaning**  **(What meanings exist beyond the literal?)** | What meaning does the poem have beyond the literal meaning? Fill in the chart below. | | |
| Form (How are the stanzas arranged? How are line breaks used?) | Imagery (Sensory Details) | Poetic Devices |
| **Tone** | What is the narrator’s tone? How does the narrator feel about him/herself, about others, and about the subject? What is the author’s tone? How does the author feel about the narrator, about other characters, about the subject, and the reader? | | |
| Narrator: | | |
| Author: | | |
| **Theme** | What is the overall message of the poem? | | |

**Step-by-Step Poetry Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title**  **“The Dandelion Wars” by Liam Anderson** | **What do the words of the title suggest to you? What literal meaning is presented in the title? What figurative meaning do the words possess?**  L: Some sort of fight with flower or flower against flower  F: Wars can be external or internal  After reading: “Dandelion Wars” can refer to the childhood game that the speaker used to play, but on a deeper level, it can refer to the internal war that young adults battle when losing childhood innocence. | | |
| **Paraphrase** | **Translate the poem in your own words. What is the poem about?**  The narrator in the poem is playing make believe as a kid and pretending to be King Lord Sir Mr. Al Bob. He is at war with the dandelion soldiers and must defeat them by decapitating them. He is now older and watches his brother playing make believe and wonders why his brother is acting so silly. He remembers being a kid again and sees the fun part of him he left behind. He goes out to play with his brother to reminisce about his childhood. | | |
| **Figurative Meaning**  **(What meanings exist beyond the literal?)** | **What meaning does the poem have beyond the literal meaning? Fill in the chart below.** | | |
| **Form (How are the stanzas arranged? How are line breaks used?)**  Free verse  “And I miss it” – stanza all alone = important | **Imagery (Sensory Details)**  Hundreds of yellow heads  Wild battle scream  Shaking in their shoes  Hum my war song  Frightening frown, eyes narrowed, ears back  Hum Wishbone’s theme song | **Poetic Devices**  I gaze upon the army (metaphor)  Yellow heads (metaphor)  No prisoners (metaphor)  I know they are deadly (personification)  First man (metaphor)  Smile, scream, show skills; shaking in shoes; lie on the lawn; frightening frown(alliteration)  Shaking in their shoes (personification)  Grunt (onomatopoeia) |
| **Tone** | **What is the narrator’s tone? How does the narrator feel about him/herself, about others, and about the subject? What is the author’s tone? How does the author feel about the narrator, about other characters, about the subject, and the reader?** | | |
| **Narrator:** As a kid playing war, the speaker’s tone is one of confidence and bravado  As a young adult, the speaker’s tone is one of nostalgia  **Author:** The author’s tone shows a longing for childhood and innocence | | |
| **Theme** | What is the overall message of the poem?  The theme is coming of age and the struggle some people have with losing their childhood innocence and entering adulthood. The speaker in this poem, embraces that innocence when he sees his little brother playing make believe. We are reminded that we can always be young at heart. | | |