**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.

Poetry Reflection Sheet

Name of Song/Poem: “The Dandelion Wars”

Artist/Writer: Liam Anderson

**What was your initial emotional response to the poem/song?**  **Which parts of the poem/song elicited that response?**

This poem makes me nostalgic for childhood. It makes me think about the importance of holding on to our inner child. Beautiful visual details such as the “hundreds of yellow heads” combined with sound details like the “wild battle scream” help to create a vivid picture in my mind of the boy’s imaginary world.

**Translate the poem in your own words. What is the poem about?**

The narrator in the poem reminisces about when he was a young boy and would pretend to be a King at war with dandelion soldiers, which he would defeat by decapitating them with his “sword”. He is now older and watches his brother playing a similar game and he 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 then goes out to play with his brother and reconnects with his inner child.

**What do you think is the theme of the poem/song? Write this in paragraph form, using a quote to support your response.**

“Dandelion Wars” refers to a 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. The theme is coming of age and when the speaker embraces his childhood innocence at the end of the poem, we are reminded that we can always be young at heart. The structure of the poem is free verse, and while most stanzas are similar in length, one stands out – “And I miss it”. This line is given a stanza all on its own, which highlights the importance of this line. Indeed, the speaker misses being a child, which is a central theme in the poem.

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| **Poetic Device** | **Evidence from Text** | **Effect on Poem/Song** |
| Metaphor | “I gaze upon the army: hundreds of yellow heads” | The poet uses the metaphor of an army to describe the dandelions, which paints a clearer picture of the boy’s imaginary world. |
| Personification | “they are deadly” and “shaking in their shoes”. | The author uses personification to give the dandelions human qualities, which puts us in the young boy’s shoes as he uses his imagination. |
| onomatopoeia | “grunt” | This word demonstrates the confidence that the author had when he was within his imaginary world. |

**What are three examples of poetic devices used in this poem? Explain how it influences the overall effect of the poem/song.**

Poetry Reflection Sheet

Name of Song/Poem: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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What was your initial emotional response to the poem/song? Which parts of the poem/song elicited that response?

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| **Poetic Device** | **Evidence from Text** | **Effect on Poem/Song** |
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What are three examples of poetic devices used in this poem? Explain how it influences the overall effect of the poem/song.