

Edward Ferri, Jr. – Two Poems

Pickles and Perspectives

They used to produce pickles
in San Martin, California, right next
to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks
and the old Highway 101, El Camino Real.
Same facility as where that winery is now.

Back in the early sixties during one
of those hot high school summers my
big brother worked there for school
clothes and football shoes money.

He said that during their work breaks
they'd sneak over to the train tracks
and lob culled cucumbers once
destined to be a big dill pickle
at the bums on the trains
as the trains rolled by.

Said he hit one once
with a big cucumber
right square in the chest.

Timed it perfect he said,
freight train rumbling on by
hit this poor guy while he was sleeping
getting some rest in the warm sun on
an open empty southbound flatcar.

My brother, who became
a college professor and is
now retired, doesn't like me
to mention that story so much.

Howling hilarious to a high school kid,
but not so funny as an adult in retrospect.
Could have really hurt that poor hobo.
But, his lob timing was perfect.

Leverage

Growing up on our country farm
in a place called the Llagas District
southwest of San Jose, California,
my Dad taught me about leverage.
How to pull nails.
How to pound nails.
How to move boulders.
How to open most anything.
How to square and level a barn.

How to dig a ditch or an animal grave in
the concrete clay of a California summer with
a soil polished shovel older than me and a digging
bar made by him from a solid steel Chevy drive-shaft.
How to split white oak firewood by the full cord for
winter with a stone sharpened splittin' axe, farm forged
iron wedges and a ten pound sledge hammer.

Before long, I realized that most every chore I had
on the farm utilized some form of leverage including
wheel barrowing concrete from the cement mixer up
ramps to wood framed foundation forms. The more I
learned how to apply and master my father's leverage
lessons the easier life became and the tougher I grew.

That ability to use leverage made me grow up faster,
stronger and smarter than the young kid I really was.
My Dad liked that. I did too. Made the open road and
flat lands seem like down hill when I fledged the farm.

Dad is now 40 years gone and so is the farm. But I am
the proud curator of those old basic hand tools and the
memories of those engrained leverage lessons that he
taught me. I now teach the grandkids those same lessons
with Dad's old tools. Make 'em smarter. Make 'em tougher.

Dad would be pleased that his old tools of leverage,
still grain stained with his sweat soaked DNA, are being
properly maintained, used and cared for. But mostly
he would be proud that his ageless lessons of leverage
and the way he taught those valuable lessons are being
passed down through the generations after him.

Now that's leverage.

No matter what district you grew up in.

Edward Ferri, Jr. grew up on a "non profit" farm on the dry side of the Santa Cruz Mountains when "Bailing wire, gumption, and spit" were the "apps" of the day. He is a strong believer in the spirit of Boo Radley and he still savors lessons learned during the 'missing miles' lived on the roads of North America with a motorcycle named "Little Curry." He is a graduate of San Jose State University and one nasty cold night at the Big 8 Motel in El Reno, OK. His poetry has appeared in multiple publications including *Lucidity*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Still Crazy*, *Agave*, *Hobo Camp Review*, *Haiku Universe*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *Main Street Rag*, *Constellations* and *Your Daily Poem*. His first chapbook **GLASSY AIR**, *Poems Kindled in the Long Shadow of a Lone Motorcycle* was published in 2018.