

BEVERLY CLEARY'S DEAD
(NOW SHE'S ON THE OUTSIDE, LOOKING IN)

RAMONA'S RED BOOTS ARE LONG STOLEN.
RIBSEY WAS KILLED BY A CAR.
HENRY IS NOW HENRIETTA,
IN MANY RESPECTS WE'VE COME FAR.

BUT ON 33RD, NEAR KLICKITAT,
ON THE HILL WHERE RAMONA WOULD SLIDE,
THERE'S BUMPER TO BUMPER TRAFFIC NOW,
NOT A SAFE PLACE FOR SLEDS TO RIDE.

RAMONA'S CRAFT HOUSE, ON 37TH
THAT HER FOLKS BOUGHT FOR THIRTY GRAND,
JUST SOLD FOR A MILLION DOLLARS,
THEY TORE IT DOWN FOR THE LAND.

THEY'RE BUILDING SOME FLAT-TOPPED BOXES THERE
THAT WILL HOUSE 30 PEOPLE OR MORE
THEY SAY IT'S GOOD FOR THE CITY,
BUT THE FOLKS LIVING HERE, AREN'T SO SURE.

METRO'S PLOTTED 25 FOOT LOTS,
TO PUT THESE TALL BOXES ON...
THE KIDS WILL PLAY IN THE STREETS I THINK,
CAUSE THERE WON'T BE DRIVEWAYS OR LAWNS.
THEY'LL CALL THEM "RAMONA APARTMENTS"
TO MAINTAIN THE "NEIGHBORHOOD FEEL"
WE'RE SCRATCHING OUR HEADS IN WONDER,
WHY NOT KEEP THE ONE THAT WAS REAL?

SOME FOLKS MIGHT SAY I'M A "NIMBY"
BUT I THINK WE NEED TO BE CLEAR
THAT WOULD IMPLY THERE'S NO PROBLEM NOW
AND THIS PROBLEM IS ALREADY HERE.

OUR AIR'S SECOND WORST IN THE NATION*,
BUT WE KEEP CUTTING DOWN ALL OUR TREES.
WE ALL FEEL OUR NEIGHBORHOODS,
AREN'T QUITE THE SAME
WITHOUT THESE GREEN CANOPIES.

THE WILLAMETTE, WITH SEWAGE FROM HOMELESS
IS A CRYPTOSPORIDIUM SLUDGE*...
WATER FOUNTAINS STILL BUBBLE, IN ALL OF OUR PARKS,
BUT FOLKS HERE DON'T DRINK FROM THEM MUCH
SCAVENGING BOTTLES FROM CURBSIDES,
THE HOMELESS NOW SLEEP IN GRANT PARK.
MIDST THEIR SHOPPING CARTS AND ANGRY HEARTS....
WE DON'T WALK THERE NOW IN THE DARK.

YOU CAN'T BUY A HOME WITH NO JOB FOR A LOAN;
THIS IS MORE THAN HOUSING THE POOR,
THIS SYSTEMIC PROBLEM NEEDS A SYSTEMIC FIX*
WE'VE A HALF MILLION HOMELESS, OR MORE.*

YOU'LL LINE DEVELOPER'S POCKETS
YOU'LL INCREASE THE CITY'S TAX BASE
BUT WHERE'S THE PLAN HERE FOR THE HOMELESS?
WE DON'T SEE THAT BEING PUT IN PLACE*

I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE A "NUMBIE"
TRYING TO REASON WITH FOLKS WHO WON'T HEAR.
I LIKE MY NEIGHBOR'S ADU;
I'M NOT AGAINST WELL-PLANNED HOUSING HERE.

THE BLACK IRON RINGS ON OUR CURBSIDES,
TELL THE TALE OF HORSES NOW GONE;
BUT THE ACTORS, CONTRACTORS AND METRO
MAKE ME FEEL LIKE THE HORSESHIT LIVES ON...

ROBERT KELLUM 10-15-18

* <https://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2016/01/oregon-ranks-low-in-education.html>

* <https://www.kgw.com/article/weather/air-quality/portlands-air-quality-ranks-second-worst-in-major-cities-worldwide/283-586223379>

* <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/local/state-will-seize-transient-boats-dumping-sewage-in-willamette-river/283-552074134>
<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-05-21/ending-homelessness-is-a-job-for-the-federal-government>

* <https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2017-12-06/us-homeless-count-rises-pushed-by-crisis-on-the-west-coast>

*See PROGRAMS like <https://www.councilforthehomeless.org/> for a creative focused direction for housing the homeless as part of a larger initiative