

**I had a love-hate relationship with the collection of poems that one of my fellow English teachers analyzed with his class. It is William Heyen's *Pterodactyl Rose*. The importance of the poems in the book is unchallenged here. There are poems about subjects that are rarely the subjects of poetry: the extinction of animal life, such as the dodo, the overabundance of pollution (air, sea), the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the secret history of such weaponry; the damage caused by chemicals used as weed killers and insecticides; et al. You will find no love poems here, no sad laments about lovers lost or moon-croon romantic pieces. Instead, you will have page after deadly page of poems that continuously and exhaustively point the finger of our fate at us humans for being the common cause of too many natural disasters.**

**I used to have to mix my assistance in helping students understand the stark imagery and esoteric historical allusions with some psychological relief that they were not to shoulder the burden for all of human folly.**

**As I wrote, this collection has a great moral message for current and future generations, and I salute Professor Heyen for that. I even enjoyed my position as de facto expert on the poems and go-to guy ready to help Mr. Ehrlich's students when they appeared looking emotionally haggard at my table in our Study center. The Requiem is for the fact that when Mr. Ehrlich retired, no one was there to pick up the cause and teach the poems in this book, and so, for all intents and purposes (Love those British repetitions!), this collection of poems became as extinct as the dodo and the dinosaur.**



**John Heyen**