**Poetry Analysis – “Dandelion Wars” by Liam Anderson**

The poem “Dandelion Wars” by Liam Anderson reminds us that although we all grow up, we can still be young at heart. The speaker 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.

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. The use of sensory details and figurative language also support the figurative meaning of the text. 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 the reader’s mind of the boy’s imaginary world.

The numerous metaphors in this piece demonstrate that this poem is not just about cutting weeds; it’s about a boy’s creative imagination. The first line, “I gaze upon the army: hundreds of yellow heads”, uses the metaphor of an army to describe the dandelions. The author also uses personification to give the dandelions human qualities: “they are deadly” and “shaking in their shoes”. These examples put us in the young boy’s shoes as he uses his imagination.

The author uses a first person point of view. As a kid playing war, the speaker’s tone is one of confidence and bravado, and as a young adult, it is one of nostalgia. This is matched by the author’s tone, which shows a longing for childhood innocence. There is, however, a shift in tone with the stanza “Now…”, which shows the speaker is in present time, thinking about the change from childhood to adulthood. “So I throw on the jacket” shows another shift with the speaker embracing innocence through his little brother.

 “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.