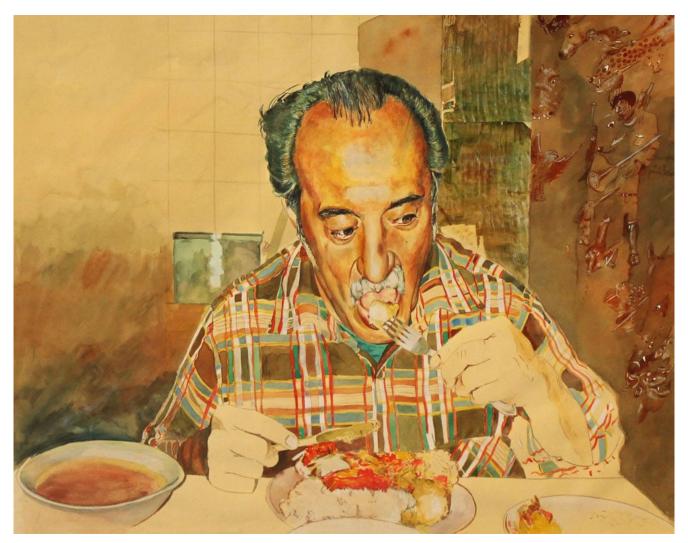
## King of Swords

## by <u>Robert Beveridge</u> (August 2024)



My Father (Alberto Gomez, 2001)

My sophomore American Lit professor came to the open reading one night and in a sweater vest and khakis read us a poem about how he took ordnance out into the woods and tracked deer by their spoor, the bent and broken foliage in woods so deep the sun was considered a guest who'd worn out their welcome.

The rest of us clapped, convinced we had written the poem that would end world hunger or war or students' inability to follow along with Calculus I, polite, dismissive, closed.

That was thirty-five years ago. I just turned fifty-three. Two nights ago, as I made a burrito, I realized that sometime in the past few months I'd begun to value iceberg lettuce in a way I never could before.

There wasn't much distinctive about that burrito. The seasoning was from an envelope, the cheese was pre-shredded. But when I sat down and bit into it, the crunch from that plain iceberg lettuce was cold, crisp, a perfect balance to melted cheese and meat so hot steam rose where my teeth had been an instant before.

## Table of Contents

**Robert Beveridge** makes noise (<u>xterminal.bandcamp.com</u>) and writes poetry on unceded Mingo land (Akron, OH). He published his first poem in a non-vanity/non-school publication in November 1988, and it's been all downhill since. Recent/upcoming appearances in *Utriculi*, *Yawp*, and *Leaf by Leaf*, among others.

Follow NER on Twitter <a>ONERIconoclast</a>