Kenneth Rosen of Portland has published numerous collections of poetry, including *The Origins of Tragedy*, which includes “The Alligator’s Hum.” The poem brings together alligators, dating and poetry in a combination that makes us rethink all three.

**The Alligator’s Hum**

*by Kenneth Rosen*

To allure an alligator lady so she’ll allow him
To fertilize her eggs before she buries them
In her sand nest, the male alligator
Hums in a swamp pond like a kid in a bathtub.
It hums like a foghorn: Hummmmmm! And raises
Queer geysers of water by his torso’s profound
Vibrations, these inverted, fragile, almost crystal
Chandeliers his obligatto of amor. I have tried this
On dates without knowing what I was doing:
Hummmmmm! My date pretended she didn’t know
What I was doing either and would ask,
“Are you all right?” Hmmmmmm! I’d echo,

Something below my solar plexus now governing
My lowest, reptilian, ganglion brain. But I swear,
Like people who claim they can’t understand poetry,
She knew what it meant for the hum of the body
To dominate mind, It meant please admire
My wet inverted chandeliers, which translates
Like all poetry too, into alligator: You can get me,
If you let me, you grinning, beautiful
primordial swampwater creature you!” Then their tails
Slap the water with a belly whomp.
They thrash like mad, almost invincible—though the human
Eye is never naked—and then it’s over.

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