

Poems by Dwight Bitikofer

**Bitikofer**

**6-4-07**

**On the Way to Aunt Roberta's Funeral**

Chasing night, losing the race, climbing the slope of the ball  
at an angle ever increasing as the blue remnant of day fades  
into the shadow of clouds, light and dark, space and shape  
dissolving.....

the end game of a Monday, end of a life that turned  
nearly 32,000 revolutions of days now dissolved  
into a west that can't be seen from here, that can't be  
experienced from here.....

the ascent at a greater angle up this ball rolling away from light,  
turning into night, the space between the generations,  
the dark between sunset and dawn, the winter between autumn  
and spring.....

Despite this month of longest days in this hemisphere  
we know as home for awhile, for 30 or 35 thousand revolutions,  
upside down now sucking air up the backward roll of this ball,  
underside falling.....

an underside where nights are longer, darker, unseen between  
the sunsets of years and sunrises only imagined,  
generations following, echoing, following, echoing only  
10 thousand turns behind.....

## Spilled Moonlight

Moonlight puddles on the deck  
splashes across the lawn  
it drips among the shadows

The face of the child inside  
begins to pucker  
his lips quiver and eyes tear

I am about to tell him  
“It’s no use crying  
over spilled moonlight”

But something stops me –  
There is time in the night  
to let go of needing to be strong

“Go ahead,” I say  
“It is good to cry  
over spilled moonlight”

We sit on the steps together  
The child inside sobs  
I try to follow

Moonlight dribbles  
down our faces  
glints upon the fallen glass

Tears puddle on the deck  
splash across the lawn  
and light the darkness of our shadow

DRB

9/1/01

## Can Poetry Change The World?

Someone asked a question of a poet:

“Can poetry change the world?”

The poet smiled but had no answer

boomeranged the question,

it bounced from her voice

glanced sideways

lodged in me

and now I ponder

Change the world?

Poetry?

Maybe.

If we believe in possibilities

that multitudes of angels –

that sacred dozen–dozen–thousand

really are capable of frolic

or love–making

on the head of a single pin

If we believe

that poems like prayers

come from places deep within

channel energies uncomprehended

by intellectual analysis

Maybe

if we not only believe, but share

the breath and metaphor

of images untangled

from constraints of grammar,

structure, punctuation

– perceptions unwound of line and logic.....

This question followed me into a dream

the dream began to spin a story

built on a supposition

of possible unfoldings

of poetry from pages  
and plunged its words into the midst  
of anger, chaos, opportunities for healing:

IF a soldier makes a poem  
and gives it to the mother  
who has lost her child;  
and if the mother cries her lines  
and drapes them over the shoulders  
of the man determined for revenge

And if the avenger writes his rage  
in words that release their venom  
so that his soul may heal  
and if he gives his poem to his enemy  
and if his enemy reads  
with even a glimmer of understanding  
and then pens his own frustration,  
anger and maybe even hope

And if the enemy of the avenger  
passes these musings of his own  
up the chain of his command  
and his words are read by one  
with power to exercise restraint  
that saves the life of a boy

And if that boy then writes  
a poem of gratitude and sorrow,  
discovers in his life a flash of grace  
and if he shares his treasure with a teacher  
who finds inspiration in the story of the boy  
carried now by his poem

And if the teacher uses  
this new energy to empower  
among her students  
courage, beauty, confidence  
to create and carry stories of their own  
across the town, to other cities  
and around the world

THEN poetry may flower,  
may send the scent of peace  
reflect the brilliance of self respect

THEN the words of poetry  
may take on power  
in the numbers of their creators  
to fly, transform  
heal, build bridges  
make love for a moment  
in one heart  
one place  
two times, fifty times  
ten million times a day

WHEN we believe  
that poetry CAN change the world

by Dwight Bitikofer  
July, Aug, Sept, Nov. 06