

## Mark Bonica -- Two Poems

### How Many Angels

My mother kept a pin cushion  
in the likeness of a tomato:  
a red stuffed ball  
with a green leaf of felt on top.

Stick pins and needles jutted out  
with heads of rounded colorful plastic.

I don't remember the first time  
I noticed the angel  
dancing alone on one of the old fashioned  
metal heads -  
if you think about it, you will understand  
it's not the sort of thing you notice  
consciously,  
rather it accumulates in your mind.

I do remember  
watching her sometimes  
the heavenly lightness of her pirouette,  
steps and balance  
there on the tiny dance floor.

I must have been about thirteen  
when I asked her the question -  
"Where are all your friends?  
The answer can't be just one.  
Just one would not be interesting at all."

I remember she paused and sighed  
and squatted down,  
wrapping her arms around her knees.  
Her white gown swirled with the breeze,  
her wings sticking up a bit  
behind her bent head.

"No one asks the question anymore.  
But the answer was never the point,"  
she replied.

And then she looked up at me,  
forced a smile,  
and resumed her dance.

## **I Chose the Rainbow**

The decision to wear blue today  
seemed like it was out of your hands -  
you are part of that greater  
blue and black bruise  
of businessmen flowing along the arteries  
of the T below ground.

I am not so young as to believe  
the work you are doing is without purpose  
or meaning;  
challenge or triumph.

But the flow will continue long after  
your suit is on a Goodwill rack.

It is a choice  
is all I'm saying.

Like mine was to wear red  
and drink coffee  
and write about you.

The poor will always be with us,  
and my red shirt will be on a rack  
in the same store as your blue suit -  
the cheaper rack of course -  
along with my striped vest  
and that fiery orange thing  
I wore on Thursdays.

I hope I am not bitter  
when I cannot afford  
the extra round of chemo  
that may or may not extend my life  
six months,  
six months you may have and I will not.

I hope I remember coffee on Thursdays  
as having been worth the choice.  
A long bruised line  
may be what I wish for then,  
and you should have your secretary remind me  
I chose the rainbow,  
and contrary to popular opinion,  
rainbows are not free.

**Mark Bonica's** poetry and fiction have appeared in *Vagabondage*, *Znine*, *Words-Myth*, *StarLine*, *Right Hand Pointing*, and others. Mark lives on New Hampshire's seacoast where he is paid to bend young minds.