

# THE JADED COMPOSITIONIST MEDITATES ON HIS CALLING DURING AN ATTACK OF INFLUENZA

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W. ROSS WINTEROWD

Thank God, I say, for student essays!  
They let us while away our days  
In what we hope is harmless work,  
Hunting for the errors that lurk  
Within the Twinky prose.  
Those acne essays—we've tried, heaven knows,  
To improve their complexion  
By noting each and every possible correction,  
And feeding their authors, without apology,  
Nutritious fare from the Norton anthology.  
We may do some good; we hope so.  
In any case, this much we do know:  
The essays probably won't be terrific,  
Yet they'll serve as a soporific  
To deaden the pain of arthritis or flu.  
Ah yes, our themes will see us through  
The dismal dregs of sniffing Sundays,  
The aching, hacking nights of Mondays,  
Weekend, weekday—noses or knees, heads or backs,  
Wherever the malady, themes help us relax.  
Those narcotic anodynes, those horrendous stacks—  
We need them. We're nothing but pitiful hacks,

Self-righteously flaunting devotion to duty,  
To error-free prose and to truth and to beauty,  
When we know for a fact (and this is sublime):  
Our mission is really just to kill time.

Dr. Winterowd says of his poem, "Hardly profound, it's mildly humorous, and some of its rhymes are serendipitous." When unimpaired by flu, Dr. Winterowd teaches, with enthusiasm for students and their work, at the University of Southern California.