

## Poems by Kate Mullikin

### Box Boy

Put down that box, boy  
With the shiny guns  
And metallic sounds  
And false glory  
Stop repeating that same  
Old bloody story  
In different places  
Though I must admit,  
The graphics are quite real  
And make you feel  
As if you actually are there -

Yet why you want to go there  
I can't understand -  
You become the main character:  
A hunter, a soldier, a slayer, a man -

But you're just a boy  
With a box of violence for a toy

Turn off your not-so-magic lantern  
And let a book turn you on instead  
Read about death  
Read about bloodshed  
Read about revenge and regret  
And all its human possibilities  
Learn about others' lives and sensibilities  
Anything else besides your own quest  
To be the best at a game of war

Open up your brain son  
Before your eyeballs bleed  
Put down that box boy,  
Pick up a paper book  
Turn over a new leaf  
AND READ.

## **Making Art**

To make art  
You must start  
With the heart of a child  
And then run wild  
Around the possibilities  
Of being completely in control  
Of something that may one day  
Take over your soul.

To make art you must  
Practice being patient and smart  
And ignore the clock  
And enjoy the time  
To draw a line  
That makes a shape  
That adds value  
To your design  
That takes form  
In your life -  
A form that you  
Might like to add  
Texture and color to  
And hurl out into space  
Declaring that you are you.

## **Most Satisfying**

When middle school children find  
The right book to hook them in,  
As they read,  
Their brains grow  
And auras glow...

My senses spin –  
I feed off their energy  
From within.

There is nothing more beautiful

Than a teen-age face  
In a far off place  
On a sea of words...

The only sound that can be heard  
In our classroom today  
Is breath  
And sometimes the occasional  
Gasping or  
Laughter burst.

The sight of a bunch of good books being devoured  
By a class of mindful middle school students -

Is the most satisfying sight on earth.

## **Open Up**

The middle school children huddle by the entrance  
Looking for a door to be opened  
They stand under bare trees in the cold  
In the corners of the school yard  
Waiting for the building to be unlocked

Some shiver and read from a paper book  
Some sip from a gas station coffee cup  
Looking up at the morning sky  
Trying hard to catch my eye as I hurry by  
And slink back in my hole

Where I am sucked in by  
Computer screens, piles of papers and  
Streams of e-mails with edicts pouring in –  
I begin to scurry and worry about my lessons  
Running up and down the stairs to and from  
The copy room.

Still, outside the school children stand in wait  
They watch me sneak by again  
Now with piles of hand-outs

They stretch out their eager hands and cry out  
“Can we help?”

Their voices soothe me.  
Their faces move me to the moment.

“Please help me,” I respond happily -  
And their eyes light up  
And the doors are opened.

### **First Computerized Standardized Test**

Oh brave new world  
With such brave people in it -

Hammering away at the key board  
Trying so hard not to be bored  
Torn, worn down by society's  
Grinding wheel that keeps on turning  
Out new ways of performing  
Printing out and showing  
What it is we should be knowing  
By now, and now, and how about now?  
We should all know how to  
Type, Skype, Facebook,  
Email, Text, Tweet,  
Instagram and oh yes READ  
In order to succeed to sift  
Through the sources to decide what is real  
To surf the web, to research  
Relate and prove *that we can think* Critically  
And still have some strength left to feel -  
Lost in this ocean of new technology  
Old folks like me can be shaken  
Taken back, feel forsaken  
I must awaken to the fact that  
My students are and will always be  
More technologically savvy than me  
Yet I still have so much to give  
Living in this school

My second home  
The kids my heartbeat - they set the tone  
Of a rhythm and enthusiasm for life  
Pushing the blood around my bones  
And through my tired veins  
I am renewed again  
With the faith that they can  
Conquer whatever machine  
They are given to measure the  
Depths of their still forming teenage brains -

Oh brave new world  
With such brave people in it.