



I brought flowers to unmarked graves
Settled debts of unknown
Walked through deserted streets
Shook hands with verbose vendors
But now I return home to this page
And the next
Flip ahead in hopes of redemption
But well aware that's unlikely
And I'll take forgiveness
Or even sour old sympathy
My heels are worn
But not where they should be.
I've rounded so many edges
I'm not to be trusted
There are rusted automobiles
And other abandoned misfit false starts
Jeering at me from the road that edges the cliff
Breathing down on me
Laughing now in unison
Singing like a chorus of unaware children
Young souls with doting parents
Broken TV's and covered sofas
These are not today's children
Strung out on juice boxes, heroin and the
Realization that success no longer exists
The golden age is tarnished forever
Their best chance was in a cereal box
Before they stopped believing their parents
No, these are forgotten children
Most of whom will be beat up on the playground
Before they go to middle school
They will seep into cracks
Slip into invisible, underground tunnels
And join the silent revolution of mud crawlers
Their faces all the same
Their uniforms - the freshest mud they can find
And they never ask why or what's next

DONE WITH GOING BACK TO SLEEP (MUD CRAWLERS)

ERIC LYDEN

Eric C. Lyden has been a freelance writer for over twenty-years. Most of his publications are in his career field, psychology. But his true passion is poetry. Eric has self-published six volumes of poetry and numerous chapbooks. His other publication credits include poems in numerous journals, including *Poecentric Lounge*, *Moody Street Irregulars*, *Sic*, and *Dribble*. In addition, Eric edited *The Moment*, L.A. Arts Journal from 1985 to 1991. *The Moment* published local poets, prose writers, artists, cartoonists and essayists. Eventually, *The Moment* attracted submissions nationally and soon Charles Bukowski became a regular contributor, and we published poetry by Allen Ginsberg, Sean Penn, Lyn Lifshin, Jack Micheline and Jack Hirschman. In 2010, Eric had a short story published in the *BANKRUPTURE* edition of *Pacific Review*. Eric has also written two novels and is currently completing a third. Eric is married and has two sons. His oldest son works as a deckhand on a fishing boat which has led to the unthinkable – Eric has become an avid fisherman. His younger son is following in his father's footsteps, already doing a number of open mic readings of his own poetry at the age of fourteen.

