

GEORGE BOWERING / A Ballpark Figure

His parents knew how to be Irish, giving one son to the Church and letting the other become a poet.

He got born in a poet city, and then he went to Utah, and then he went to Terrace, not Paris, Terrace.

He lived with me and my family twice, a perfect gentleman, didn't scare us, we're not Irish.

George really likes tradition—he starts a new one whenever he can, gives it a name, could have been a saint.

But he's the commissioner of everything, he rules on questions proposed by idiot poets; we love him and his judgment.

Could have been umpire in chief, making instant preposterous poems in the grandstand behind home plate.

His parents should have had a dozen Irish sons; they would have become a San Francisco Renaissance.

People need his poetry the way they need oxygen, especially when they don't seem to see either one.

He has his faults, just the way the marble used to make Michelangelo's *pietà* has its faults.

He makes you sit there dreaming up extravagant sentences, while he composes a poem with trucks in it.

The poem just drove down here from Terrace, and George has a pen hidden on him somewhere.

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