

Poetry from Eddie

You Can Do It, Eddie!

When I was a kid, I played hard at basketball.
I wasn't all that good. I was far from being tall,
but I could make a layup, and I hustled down the court
and played the game with heart. I really was that sort!

Still, I was so very tiny that a free throw was too long.
I lacked the strength to throw that far, so often they went wrong.
I remember one game, it was late, and the score was close,
and I got fouled and knew we needed those points the most.

One and one at the free-throw line—make one and get another,
and I was focused and I was ready—but I hadn't factored Mother!
My mom went to every game, in fact to each event.
She knew a mom's job when she saw it, duty heaven sent!

So, as the pressure mounted and quiet reigned supreme,
I pictured myself successful, and in a winner's dream.
As I bent my knees, and began to shoot, I knew that I was ready!
When suddenly a shout shattered all my preparation;
it was Mom with, "You can do it, Eddie!"

Well, needless to say, I was so embarrassed, I missed that crucial shot
and I could have dropped down through the floor, right there on the spot!
But now, after all these years later, I can't recall one score.
Don't remember how many we won, or lost—doesn't matter anymore.

But I do remember Mom, and I know she was always there,
wanting only the best for me; I know she truly cared!
And sometimes when things are rocky, or some task is hard to do,
I hear my Mom with, "You can do it, Eddie!" and it takes me right on through!



Eddie's high school basketball team. He's in the front row, holding the ball.

D. Wilcoxon



—J. Don Cook, *Steering from the Hip* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2011)

EIGHT SECONDS

He eases himself down onto a mountain top,
a volcano of muscle, blood and bone,
and there's only room for one up there;
he's up there all alone!

The chute sides clank and clatter
as the beast pulses wild within.
He pulls the rigging tight and thinks,
"Here we go again!"

When the mountain briefly settles,
the chute gate belches open—open wide,
and the cowboy high atop yells out,
"COME ON BOYS, LET'S RIDE!"

Two thousand pounds explodes out into the open air,
bellowing and snorting, mad as Hell at the burden way up there!
Two quick steps and a whirlwind spin,
but the cowboy's still up there, settled in!

Then a mighty bawling leap, and the bull crashes to the earth,
four feet planted firmly, aghast at this thing around his girth.
He spins again, and yet again, a tornado born in Hell;
and holding tight, and straining hard, the cowboy fights the well—

that vortex in the center where all the sirens call,
"Let go! Get off! Be done, before he makes you fall!"
where you'll crash among the crushing hooves and vainly try to crawl,
seeking safety from those hooking horns, by scrambling for the wall!

But the instant passes quickly and he's in control again.
"Come on old boy, I'm still here, so spin, and spin, and spin!"

And joyous laughter fills his mind as he hears the buzzer call!
8 SECONDS! IT'S ETERNITY! 8 SECONDS—MAN, IT'S ALL!