

## Dostoevsky

*Charles Bukowski*

against the wall, the firing squad ready.  
then he got a reprieve.  
suppose they had shot Dostoevsky?  
before he wrote all that?  
I suppose it wouldn't have  
mattered  
not directly.  
there are billions of people who have  
never read him and never  
will.  
but as a young man I know that he  
got me through the factories,  
past the whores,  
lifted me high through the night  
and put me down  
in a better  
place.  
even while in the bar  
drinking with the other  
derelicts,  
I was glad they gave Dostoevsky a  
reprieve,  
it gave me one,  
allowed me to look directly at those  
rancid faces  
in my world,

death pointing its finger,  
I held fast,  
an immaculate drunk  
sharing the stinking dark with  
my  
brothers.

*Keillor, Garrison, ed. Good Poems.  
New York: Viking, 2002. Print.*