

## Discussion Questions for *Blood Pages*

by *George Bilgere*

1. In an interview of George Bilgere conducted by Timothy Green from *Rattle*, Green observed that Bilgere often “writes through” an ending. There’s a seemingly good ending, but then he keeps going. In re-reading some of the poems, I see what he means. I think these endings provide a little surprise. I wonder if that’s the purpose (*Judy Catterton*).
2. I’m wondering why *Blood Pages* was chosen as the title poem. In a collection of poetry described in reviews as “darkly hilarious” the title seems to fall over to the dark side. Was there another poem in the collection that deserved a shot at the title? (*Sarah Barnett*)
3. I marvel at the way Bilgere combines humor and seriousness in the same poem and wonder if that might be worthy of some discussion. Billy Collins put it this way: “Bilgere is that rare poet who can be as funny or as serious as he wants to be—often at the same time.” (*Judy Catterton*)
4. How does Bilgere write so plainly about everyday things (as one critic pointed out “controlled poignancy”) and yet his work is never boring or predictable? (*Irene Fick*)
5. How does Bilgere manage to work in self-deprecation (not taking himself all too seriously) and at the same time, avoid sugary, predictable, cliché-type writing? (*Irene Fick*)
6. There is a sadness that streams through much of his work, yet it’s subtle, not “in your face”—how does he do that/? (*Irene Fick*)

And last, an observation that might be helpful in the discussion: Bilgere said that, while he doesn’t write long poems, his first drafts are longer and his process is to cut. He says he “never” adds anything. (*Judy Catterton*)