



## CANDLE IN THE WIND

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Have you ever been asked to critique someone else's work? Once, a very good friend asked me to do just that. She had already accomplished so much and gotten published in poetry, and I mean serious, English literary poetry, not the sort that young people spout nowadays with great enjoyment—you know, that senseless streetwise "flip top". Knowing how extremely talented she was, I hesitated. I gave her my reasons: I was younger than her, inexperienced at genuine literature. What right did I have critiquing her work? I even jokingly told her that she was most likely just humoring the both of us.

However, that good friend prevailed upon me to read her work and just write my thoughts about the whole thing. This I did, and promptly gave her two notebook pages of comments the next day. "Please don't laugh at my comments", I said. After she'd gone through my comments, my friend asked me if I had ever considered writing as a career option. I told her I had been editor of the literary section of our high school paper, had written a few poems and essays here and there, but have never seriously thought of pursuing writing seriously. Now, many years after that supposedly eye-opening conversation, I have lost touch with that good friend. I sometimes wonder where she is and how she is now. She lives in a village that I've visited only once in my life, and that single visit was made with her accompanying me in a hired three-wheeled vehicle. She, however, has been to where I live about a dozen times.

Many times, some people affect us in the most profound ways. They make us see the good in ourselves while managing to make it appear that we are doing them a favor. They give so much and ask for nothing I return. They make us look at ourselves deep inside and consider deeply what we can do better. Such a person was my good friend from way back. An artist through and through, writing was her passion. I have kept the photocopy of one of her published works about her native province, which she had given me herself. She was a great English grammar teacher, too, always knowing what was wrong with a sentence and explaining in detail about such things as syntax and what nots. I, for one, still have to go through each and every word in a completed work before finally being able to say fin.

However, I wish I could be able to talk to my friend and show her how she has influenced me in so many ways. The manner by which she did it might have been unassuming, but the effects were profound. I have yet to hold a candle to her name, but I sure as hell am trying to get there.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Talk about a person you trust to be sincere in his/her comments about you. Why do you like this particular person?
2. When someone you're not personally close to criticizes you, how do you deal with that?
3. Why does criticism often hurt? When does it not?
4. What's the easiest way to deal with criticism, in your opinion?
5. Do you like how people use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to rant and rave about things? Why or why not?