

Discussion Plan: “A Bed for the Night,” Bertolt Brecht

Small Group – Opening Exercise – Triads (5 minutes):

Break into groups of 3 – with people *you do not know*. Take a few minutes to think about an individual who has made meaningful social change. How did you hear about this person? What strikes you as meaningful about what this person has done?

Very Brief Introductions: Name, organization

Expectations and Ground Rules:

- Whatever you do or don’t know about poetry – if you like it or hate – just set that aside for now. Try to take it fresh, listen to others and see how it goes.
- I’ll ask a few questions – let those guide the discussion. If you want to get in, just raise your hand and I’ll acknowledge you.
- Please, as much as possible, use names when you respond – feel free to ask if you don’t remember
- We’d like to get as many people involved as we can, so if you hear your voice a lot more than others, think about dialing it back a little and getting others involved.
- The conversation will be a success IF you leave here still thinking about the questions we’ve raised and reflecting on what others have said

Reading: Bed for the Night (ask someone to read aloud).

Questions for Discussion:

- What about this man? Do you have a sense of who he is? And what he’s doing? Can you describe the scene as you envision it?
- What about these lines – it won’t change the world, it won’t end the age of exploitation, it won’t change relations among men..” What do make of them?
- Why does the keep repeating these lines? What seems significant about that?
- What does the narrator mean by “don’t put the book down on reading this, man?” What is the tone? Who is being spoken to? What does it mean?
- Where do you see yourself in this poem? What resonates for you and your own work?
- Is the kind of service you provide changing the world? Is service about “changing the world”?
- What kind of change is possible? And how do you know if you’re making change?
- Justice and Injustice – he doesn’t mention these words in the text, yet he talks about oppression and how this won’t act won’t end it. What do you make of that? How important is justice to service work and how do you know when you’re achieving it or not?

Closing exercise (2 minutes):

What question do you take away from this discussion/reading? Please write it on the note card and turn over as you leave. We will ask a few people to share.
