



“Homer” Don Burda and Young Admirer

### **The Feet of A Clown**

*If the whole world would walk with the feet of a clown;  
They'd be walkin' on sunshine, the whole world around.*

*Their feet would be lighter, than moon light you see;  
For where ever they walk, silver foot prints you'd see.*

*They'd walk on the trails, with the lonely and lost;  
They'd dance on the rain drops, and tip toe with Jack Frost.*

*They would go places, they never have been;  
To meet all the shut-in's whom they would befriend,*

*Now their feet might get dusty, tired and sore; But to  
make one feel wanted, they'd go one mile more.*

*They'd walk cross the desert, through jungle terrain;  
To reach out to others, whose lives are in pain.*

*They'd travel the by-ways and trod through the towns;  
To show all the lonely, there's love to be found.*

*Yes, the feet of a clown are very unique; 'Cause they  
take them to places, where few others seek*

*And yes there's a purpose, in those silly old shoes;  
They help to show others, they can dance away blues.*

*If each one would walk with the feet of a clown,  
All those with heartache would some day be found.*

– “Homer” and “Dee” Burda

### **Remembering Homer! -- Don “Homer” Burda**

[Homer passed away September 11, 2008. Although his heart finally gave out, his clown spirit lives on with all of us and the millions of children he has touched. Below in his own words from HCN 1999.]

As I was leaving Stanford Children's Hospital after doing a show in the play room, I was approached by a woman. “My son Jimmy is in intensive care and he just loves clowns. Do you think you could visit him?”

The six-year old boy was lying in bed with tubes hooked up to both arms and into his nose. His eyes were closed and he was making a soft groaning sound. I looked around the room and made eye contact with everyone – the mother, the grandparents, the father and the one person who was wearing an identification indicating that he was the doctor. The doctor nodded his head signaling that I could walk up to the bed and talk to Jimmy.

From the bedside I softly called out his name several times. He move his head, but didn't open his eyes and continued making this groaning sound. I then took his little hand and said softly, “Hello Jimmy, my name is Homer the Clown, and I came here to see you because I heard you really like clowns.” His eyes opened immediately and he lay there for a few seconds in total amazement looking at me and not making a sound. I continued, “I heard you were here and I just had to stop by and say Hello.” A little smile formed on his face and he spoke very softly. “Hi Homer, I remember you.” The instant he spoke those words, there was a gasp from several of the people in the room. I turned around to see what was the matter. The parents' eyes were filling with tears.

Jimmy told me that he had attended a show in which I was the performer and he had come up on stage. He wondered if I remembered him. “Of course I do” I responded, “and I am pleased that we have a chance to meet again.” He then looked up at his parents. “Dad, Mom, Homer remembers me!” I wondered if Jimmy could see the lump that had just risen in my throat and the feelings in my heart.

I reached into my carry bag and presented him with a small gift. All my gifts for the children were wrapped up so they would have the fun of unwrapping them. Because Jimmy's hands were all covered with tubes, I pretended that I was helping him open the present, even though I was doing all the unwrapping. The present was a racing car. He was all smiles as we played a little with the car.. “Will you come back, so we can play again with it together?” “You bet!” I replied.

After about 10 minutes I felt it was time to leave, so I gave Jimmy a gentle hug. The parents followed me outside and the most emotional part of the visit transpired. We all cried and hugged each other -- very few words were spoken. It was during those moments that I found out Jimmy was dying of cancer and had not spoken for the past three days.

The next morning I received a phone call from Jimmy's father. Jimmy had died that very morning still holding the small racing car. He also said that Jimmy was going to be buried with the racing car in his hands. That decision was made by the entire family. After seeing us together the evening before, they wanted to remember Jimmy smiling with the clown.

As a clown I believe I am here not to understand why a young boy dies, but to make a smile appear on a face. We have a healing power that works in many ways, maybe not to cure, but to lessen the pain and warm the heart. We are clowns, and clowns have a purpose to accomplish in whatever time we have on earth. We laugh, we cry, we share, and we also make promises like the one I made with Jimmy. Well, Jimmy is gone, but I have not forgotten my promise. **One day Jimmy and I will meet again, and we will play together with that toy racing car that we once shared.**