

## The Milligan's poetry

To say Milligan's poems are many and varied is an understatement. There are upwards of 700 of his poems published and they range across humorous to environmentally aware to romantic to emotional to reflective and deeply personal. The earliest of his published poems came from his war experience in Tunisia where he was with D Battery, 56th Heavy Regiment Royal Artillery. One of his first published poems, *Longstop Hill, 22 April 1943*, prompted by the death of one of his officers, Lt. Tony Goldsmith an Oxford educated young man destined to be a writer and scholar, who encouraged Spike in his poetry and in intellectual thought.

In 2011 on the website *The Creative Case for Diversity* innovation and excellence in the arts, John O'Donoghue argues that Spike Milligan be seen as a serious poet. He also tells how in moments of depression Spike started writing poetry and in his own words said, "...some of it is bloody good". (Poesie Brut series: Spike Milligan Poet, 2011)

Spike's poetic output has to be measured against his other creative work, script writing, performing on stage, screen and TV, as well as his other writing, novels, letters, and comedic writing. When did he get the time?

His poetry is ubiquitous, as well as being included in over forty of his own books it has regularly been included in many poetry anthologies. It is frequently found online, the web site Poem Hunter has a pdf book of 36 of his poems. He has three poems in Poem Hunter's top 500 poems of the world appearing at nos. 34, 74, and 102. The poem *On the Ning Nang Nong* (Poem Hunter no. 34) was voted UK's favourite comic poem in 1998. He is also number 65 in Poem Hunter's top 500 poets. (Spike Milligan Poems - Poem Hunter)

Many of his poems are short and pithy but not all. His longest poem was written as the foreword of the Folio Society book of *The Poetic Gems of William McGonagall* and consists of thirty one, mostly four line verses, over four and a half pages and written in the same idiosyncratic style of McGonagall himself.