

The Undiscovered Stars

*Glenn G. Coats, Reading Recovery Teacher, Hellertown, Pennsylvania
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There was a slowness
about him
a weariness,
a spring in his step
missing,
his voice a rasp
as if
he had been forced
to talk
all night long;
he was like a rabbit
in a cage
startled by all the letters
and books
I surprised him with;
afraid to look,
he flapped his arms
and hands
before his face
like the wings
of a frightened bird;
don't be afraid,
I wanted to say,
it is only a book,
it will not harm
you;
for a long time
the boy
shut out print,
developed
a pattern
of recognizing
then forgetting.

One day,
he discovered the chalk,
wrote words
in different colors,
heard voices
in another room—
“is that a television?”
he asked;
the dad who was cooking
in the book
made him think
of his own father—
the cookies he baked;
and he flipped
pages back and forth
back and forth,
“look at this,
look at this—
carriage and *carrot*
start the same,”
and he squeezed
the microphone
as if it were
a hamster,
and his eyes
were bright
in the mirror,
clear
as if he had
awakened
from restful
sleep—
and the world of books
was bright and new
flashing
like undiscovered
stars.

Wings of Literacy

*Cynthia Hutchinson
Reading Recovery Teacher
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida
Journal of Reading Recovery,
Fall 2001*

When you look at me,
Do you know you see
A butterfly
On wings of literacy?

It may be hard to tell,
But once a chrysalis shell
Held my reading wings
Tucked inside.

Then one day I emerged,
Slowly, word by word,
With damp and crumpled
Reading, writing wings.

But soon I became strong.
(It didn't take too long.)
My wings expanded.
Literacy took flight.

And now just look at me!
I write and I can read!
I soar
On wings of literacy.

Two of a Kind

*Elaine Anderson, Reading Recovery Teacher, Blairstown, New Jersey
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She couldn't point to the front of the book.
"I don't know how to read," she said.
She mixed up lots of letters and skipped over some.
"I don't know how to read," she said.
She couldn't tell what was wrong on the page or what that mark means—
"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO READ!" she said.

She could barely write her first name and *MOM*.
"I don't know how to write," she said.
She scowled when I asked her to write the words in the story.
"I told you—I don't know how to write!" she said.

She wiggled less when I read to her and we laughed at the silly car.
"I like that story," she said.
We talked about our favorite toys, and we wrote her story down.
"I can write the *b* in *bear*," she said.
Her eyes giggled when Skipper's dad ran over the strawberries.
"That's a funny story," she said.
We took turns and read books again and again.
"I think I might learn how to read," she said.
She listened to a tape of us reading a book she chose.
"I think I sound like a reader," she said.

She found some words she already knew.
"I think I can almost read," she said.
She looked at the pictures for help with a word.
"I think I can almost read," she said.
She stopped and frowned in the middle of a line.
"That didn't make sense," she said.
She made it look right, sound right, and match the story.
"NOW it makes sense!" she said.
She looked at me with a toothless grin.
"I'm really reading," she said.
She wrote *mall* because she knew *all*.
"I know how to write, too," she said.

She rocked her whole body back and forth
while her hair fell in her face.
"I'll read *Greedy Cat* again," she said.
And then she read her favorite story to
her mother and her father and her gram and her pop
and her baby brother and her grownup brother
and her dog and her cat and her hamster
and her doll and Mr. Bear
and her mailman and her dance teacher
and, for the very first time, her whole entire class.

"I really do love to read," she said.
"So do I," I said.
"We're two of a kind!" we said.

James

*Sheila Wallace,
Reading Recovery Teacher,
Anderson County, Tennessee
The Running Record, Fall 1997*

JAMES
wiry blond hair
intense green eyes
coy smile
happy

JAMES
limited early education
Special Ed in kindergarten
following in family footsteps
innocent

JAMES
16 weeks, 46 lessons
reading at grade level
performing near the top of his class
no Special Ed, no Title I

JAMES
Reading Recovery
success