The Guarantee

Cynthia Hutchinson, Reading Recovery Teacher, Palm Beach, Florida
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While working in the staff room
One busy, August day,
A group of teachers chatted and
Here's what one had to say...

"How Johnny makes me worry!
He's fragile—insecure.
I'm not sure how to help him.
I try, but he needs more.
He doesn't know his letters—
He thinks a v's a y.
He struggles so with reading,
It makes me want to cry."

A different voice rose softly
Yet firmly, from the group...
"So you're our brand new teacher...
Well, welcome to our school!
We all have little Johnnies
And little Janies, too,
But we have something special here
For kids and teachers, too!

Our school has Reading Recovery!
Do you know what that means?
It means that struggling children
Will have a better chance to read!

All Reading Recovery teachers
Must study for a year:
To learn good reading strategies
The process must be clear.

Then they teach the lowest readers
(T hat frustrate me and you),
They teach them up to 20 weeks
And know just what to do.

They look at kids' confusions
And build on what kids know.
They teach kids how to check themselves
And help themselves to grow.

These teachers are relentless.
They really don't remediate.
They analyze and focus—
Then our kids accelerate!

Your Johnnies and Janies will be helped.
They'll all read, I guarantee!
Now that you're teaching at a school
That has Reading Recovery!"
A Change of Course
Donna B. Franklin, Reading Recovery Parent, Capitol Heights, Maryland
The Running Record, Spring 1997

The author dedicated this poem to Pat Gird, her son's Reading Recovery teacher.

A small child
lost in frustration
drifted in loneliness
in a sea of confusion.

To the child,
the seas were black-gray and unforgiving;
the skies were dark and unwielding to the sun;
the winds were cold and cruel.

The child was on the verge of giving up
when a life-saver appeared—
Not a foam ring that floated past by happenstance,
but a life-saver in the form of a wise and loving woman who came armed with great purpose and determination to change the course of the drifting child.

Once the Wise One held tight the child's hand, his vision changed.
No longer was he drifting aimlessly, for now he had a destination!
He was part of an exciting adventure on the high seas, with a trusted friend to help him to face challenges with courage and turn them into successes.

His companion has gone on to rescue other drifting boats, but he sails on!
For he is the captain of his own destiny and will sail steady and straight and sure.