

I remember being a first-grader.
It was serious business at the time.

There was much about the first grade
That was challenging and frightening to me.

I remembered that the year I worked
As a teacher's aide.

There was a little boy
I worked with one-on-one that year,
Who had a learning disability.

I remember one day, we were working with words
And we came to the word "friend."

I asked him if he knew what a friend was.
He said, "Yes. A friend is someone who helps you."

I said to him,
"Do you know I am trying to help you?"

And he said, "Yes."

In that moment, we found each other
In a way I will never forget.

Passage

n i n e t y - f o u r

Finding Each Other

Many years ago, I worked as a teacher's aide
In a first-grade class.

It was a most enjoyable and growth-filled
Year for me.

I learned a great deal
In that first-grade class

About growth and development,
About what caring and teaching are,

About finding others, where they are,
And leading them from there.

There is no entrance from the outside in
To anywhere that matters.

The only access to anywhere that matters
Is from the inside out.

I am playing with words,
But I am not just playing with words.

Worlds await you, but not out there.

They are worlds of depth,
Not worlds of breadth.

They are realms of being.

You do not need to learn
How to leap buildings in a single bound,

Or how to run faster than a speeding bullet.

You need to learn what kindness is
And what it is not,

What patience is and what it is not.

As you do, you will begin to feel
Superhuman.

As you do, you will begin to see
Incredible depths.

I remember one night at a school open house
When I was in the third grade.

I went back to the classroom
Where I had been in first grade.

A friend and I laughed
At the books we had once read

When we were so little.

I don't remember what she said,

But I remember Mrs. Miller
Smiling and laughing with us.