

Robbie

An art therapist once shared a technique with me: the practice of creating art alongside the client during his/her session. I think this is a powerful tool, one that adds depth to my understanding of clients and is, at the same time, cleansing. I wrote the following poems while observing special education students in mainstream classes. This was part of a study on how the classroom system creates child outcasts among some of its members. I am not using the client's real name.

DON'T turn your back on me.

DON'T close your eyes.

I'm lonely, dammit, and I need you.

DON'T turn your nose up at me.

DON'T look away.

You're hiding from me but I can still see you.

DON'T pretend you don't notice.

DON'T move farther away.

You can't hear how my heart cries,

Or see how much it hurts me.

PLEASE turn your back on me.

PLEASE close your eyes.

My loneliness is my shelter from your pressures and my awkwardness.

PLEASE turn your nose up at me.

PLEASE look away.

It lets me hide a little better,

Withdraw into my shell.

PLEASE pretend you don't notice.

PLEASE move farther away.

I'm embarrassed by my pain

And the power you exert over me.

But don't be surprised if you turn around one day

And I'm not here.

*Because the tighter you close your eyes, the easier it becomes for me
To disappear.*

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