

variants

fool she spits and hits him hard
on the head

others take up
the cry in mocking chants of
four eyes bad-smell carrot top
and jeering labels harder
to bear than sticks and stones

of
ancient nursery rhyme
for words hurt all the more
those who cannot read them

pupils of 3C3 say
hey miss we can't work that one
out y'know we're the dumb ones

special embraces brilliance
whizz-kids brains those strange
regressive yolks who grow to
egg-heads

while
in the yard
shrill cries of sneak and teacher's-
pet puncture the air
we visit
circuses to view the freaks
mermaids the fat-lady

well-meaning adults name-call
too

 jargon that cruel rake
drags its tines through youth
weeding out the learning-
disabled hyper-active
educationally sub-normal
(some with no love or faith)

but unavoidable
you say if we're to help them?
perhaps but best remember
we're all in this together

some few dedicated ones
painstaking work on to joy
in first words spoken by boy
 deaf from birth
first steps taken
first nightmare-free sleep
first book read
 of congenital syphelitic
 psychotic
 dyslexic
no longer cripples

slow work to slowly perceive
what truths lie behind labels
of mere recognition
 a
 life-time's practice
 humanity's
 hope

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