

Not Like Me

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Where are they mommy?
The kids who look like me?
I see everyone else but me, I don't see
I should be here too don't you agree?
It should be them and us and I and we.
But where are we daddy?
My people and me?

I read ten books in school this week
I saw me once, but I did not speak
Is it wrong that I should seek
To find myself? Am I weak
For wanting them to tweak
The writing so word of me will leak
Into the collective conscious streak?

Mommy, if they know that I am capable
Would they put me at the table
With all the children who are able?
I think that would be quite noble.
Or, is that desire just a fable?
Would it shake them from begin calm and stable
If I sat there with my label?

That label was assigned in school
For my "subgroup", so says the rule
An important identification tool
I know its meaning, I am no fool
I should fight them on this, call them to a duel
But they sit there all confident and cool
While I drown in this awful messy pool

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*Jean Rattigan-Rohr is a teacher educator whose work examines the deficit approach to education that is too often taken with diverse learners. Here, she looks through a child's lens as the child is desperately trying to find someone with whom she can identify in school, in the books she reads, and in the adults who make decisions about her education.