

NOTES

We all have moments we regret from our past. In her personal, narrative poem, Sara Sutterfield Winn reflects on her past as she asks the rhetorical question, “If you could go back in time and *right* one *wrong*, would you?” This selection should be performed by a female and may be entered in either Poetry Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. The key element at the heart of this presentation lies in the performer’s ability to visualize and recreate the environment. The performer should clearly see Mandy in the corner of the cafeteria. Visualize and see the action occurring at the other tables around the cafeteria. Another decision the performer must make is whether or not to *become* Mandy during Mandy’s lines of dialogue found within the poem. As always, the drama mask icons simply serve as suggestions for where to turn the pages in the manuscript. This inspirational poem teaches one of life’s most important lessons: Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. It’s the ‘Golden Rule,’ so be golden and inspire your audiences!

Junior High cafeteria.

Mid-eighties.

It’s loud.

It’s hot.

It’s dirty.

Kids are crammed together at long tables

Where they are separated by cliques,

And there is one empty table.

And at the end of that long, empty table, there is Mandy.

Mandy—

With her clawed hands and electronic wheelchair.

Mandy—

Whose head bobs irregularly.

Mandy—

Who drools sometimes in class.

Mandy—

The retard.

And in front of Mandy

There is a pink, plastic lunchbox.

And on the cover of that pink, plastic lunchbox

There is an animated figure

Who is waiting for Mandy to open her lunch,

Because the woman that usually helps her is not here today.

Apology

By Sara Sutterfield Winn

And Mandy fumbles with the latch,
But her fingers won't respond,
And she calls out in a voice that is clear and strong,
"Can somebody help me, please?"



There is a food fight starting four tables away.
And there is laughter,
And there is gossip,
Though we all can really hear her.
And Mandy raises her voice,
"Can somebody help me, please?"



There are sandwiches flying four tables away.
And still there is laughter,
And still there is gossip,
Though we all can really hear her.
And Mandy raises her voice,
"Can somebody help me, please?
Can somebody help me, please?
Can somebody help me, PLEASE?"
And she has started to cry.



And *still* there is laughter.
And *still* there is gossip.
Though we ALL can really hear her.
And one girl—
ONE girl
Jumps up from her chair and marches over to Mandy's table
And throws open her lunchbox in disgust.
And she slams Mandy's lunch on the table.
A piece of fruit—BAM
A sandwich—BAM
A carton of milk—BAM
And she is staring at the tabletop with a clinical detachment
As Mandy mumbles 'thank you.'
And she is thinking,
'Please, God, let no one be watching.
Please, God, let no one see.'