



## **Writing Our Journey: Poems and Essays by Family Caregivers**

Each meeting has a suggested prompt, or idea, for people to write about. Everyone is free to interpret that prompt however they'd like. Below is one of the prompts, followed by a sampling of what was written in response.

Please remember that each piece of writing belongs to the writer and, if quoted, must be credited to that writer.

### **The impact your child has had on someone else**

Write about the impact your child with disabilities has had on someone else in your family (or on a friend, a neighbor, or even a casual acquaintance). What has that person said? What have you observed? What did you think have been the good and/or not-so-good aspects of this impact?

- "Her Name is Lauren", by Gail Frizzell
- "Another World", by Kathy Roberson

## Her Name is Lauren

Hello cutie, shopping with Mom today?  
Oh...she doesn't talk.

Why's that girl in a wheelchair, Dad?  
Oh...she doesn't walk.

Why is she making that noise?  
What are those things on her legs?  
Why is she rocking like that?  
I wonder,  
    What is her name?

Her name is Lauren.

Her sparkling eyes see you, I think.  
Her cherry lips have never formed words.  
Her coltish legs don't know how to dance.  
Her slim body rocks to a tune only she hears.

Her name is Lauren.

What's she listening to on those headphones?  
Oh...I like country, too.

Lauren, do you like shopping at the mall?  
Lauren...is that smile a clue?

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## Another World

Arriving at a dusty  
courtyard in the midst  
of Malawi, unfathomable  
distances from my home,  
I am surrounded by singing,  
soft harmonies tightly  
woven, bright patterns  
of cloth wrapped close, babies  
cradled against backs, women  
dancing, clasping my hand,  
nodding their heads in greeting,  
smiling a generous welcome to  
this world. I do not know  
their words, nor they  
mine. *Zikomo*, is all I can say,  
*thank you, thank you*, over  
and over, *Zikomo*, they reply.  
Our eyes meet, we parents  
of children who are different,  
dismissed, sometimes feared  
or reviled, whose futures depend  
upon whatever resolve we can  
muster each day, who do not  
fit in, not on their continent,  
nor mine, whose vulnerabilities  
call forth heartbreak, the constant  
yearning for acceptance and  
communities that will make room  
at last for those we love; this is  
a language we can all comprehend.

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