

## To a Thinker

By Jennifer Dines

Your mind  
is a beautiful place to be  
in moments of uncertainty.

Go back into your history,  
and remember the moment  
you could read  
your very first book  
on your own.  
mind moves (hello bell hooks)  
space and time away  
lost in a moment  
lost in a day

but! wait!  
the present! the future!  
whatifwhatifwhatifwhatifwhatif  
STOP THAT RIGHT NOW!  
(SMACK YOURSELF ON THE  
HAND...gently)

Now give yourself a hug.

Remember the time  
that you felt proud?

You solved a problem on your own.  
You learned a song.  
You wrote a poem.

Use your mind to look around.  
Even in the darkness of depression,  
find the beauty that can be found.

If you're a teacher (like me),  
see the thinkers through the pupils:  
young voices to speak out into the world.

[Safety is our #1 concern.]  
Protect these minds  
with a steady diet of intellect,  
not just tests, assignments, notes,  
Spanish *verbos* to be learned by rote.

Encourage questions.  
Shut up and let them THINK.  
Lead them to explore the world  
under your watchful gaze, starry-eyed  
with wonder at the marvels of our  
existence.

Just like you, the thinker -  
Now they can go back.  
When feeling Alone.  
Off the beaten track.

Traveling back  
to the science fair tri-fold board: "Which  
popcorn gives the best value for your  
money?"  
To the play that transformed them from  
quiet to LOUD  
(in a second language, at that)

To the moment that adding polynomials  
clicked.  
*Mrs. Dines, why didn't the text book just  
call it combining like terms?*  
She sighed while picking up her pencil.  
She finished  
30 problems  
in 5 minutes FLAT.

These moments you have  
in your intellect  
You built a tetrahedron – a work of art.

Cherish these times.  
Put them in your diary, your memory,  
your iPhone texts.

Go back to them again  
and again  
in darkness and in light,  
in sickness and in health,  
forever and ever until death do us part.

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