

Thoughts of a fifth grade boy

I can't read. I'm in 5th grade and I can't read.

They say a special teacher is all I need. I can talk my text, and I can phone,
but I would give my phone back, if mom could stay home.

She works at night and she gets low pay,

My dad was always drinking and he went away.

My little sister is 7 and she's a pain.

I cook us macaroni again and again.

The kids in my neighborhood are very mean.

I left the front door open and they came in through the screen.

They hurt my sister and me and made us bleed.

Mom said stitching and a bandage is all we would need.

Welfare came and took us away.

A long time later I saw my sister one day.

She waved, stood up, and started to cry,

I wondered where she lived as the bus drove by.

I know I'm not smart, I've heard them say,

and each day in school I feel that way.

But I'm going to ask teacher and I'm going to plead,

Please help me, please teach me, I just want to read.

By Robert Coberg, a teacher's reading aide in an urban school