

Faith, Hope and Fiction

Time to Turn the Table

By John Corcoran

Editor's Note: John Corcoran is a well-known literacy advocate and former board member of the National Institute for Literacy; serving under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. An adult learner, Corcoran did not learn to read until the age of 48—despite the fact he had graduated from college and had become a school teacher. He is the author of the autobiography The Teacher Who Couldn't Read and his second book Bridge to Literacy, which encourages action on every level. FaithHopeandFiction is honored to share John's poetry in a salute to literacy—and a call to action.

Some of you may think I am old.
But, in my mind I don't think I am old.
When it comes to reading I am bold,
Or so I have been told.
And perhaps I am bold,
Because I know more people need to be told.

It's true teachers can never really succeed,
Without teaching their students to read.
A student can never ever really succeed,
Until that student knows how to read.
A fact no one should ever concede,
That we can and need to learn to read.

Street smarts and an observing eye may get you by,
But inside we know most of it is a lie.
Without a full deck I played a good game.
But in the game of life I always felt lame.
You need the full deck to play your very best,
Reading the printed page is your best bet to pass the test.

I did not learn to read as a lad of eight.
I learned to read as a man, of forty-eight,
And I have to say that was great.
But, don't you think a man who learned at forty-eight
Could have, should have learned at eight?
And wouldn't that have been great.

I was glad and not mad.
But, I must admit I am sad.
They still call us learning disabled.
But we can learn; we are able.
Perhaps is time to turn the table.
Call it what it is, teaching disabled.

Forget about the shame and stop the blame.
Cut the cards, it's a new game,
We know we are learning- able,
So why do they call us learning disabled?
It's time to STOP using the label "Learning Disabled."

It's up to you; it's your deal. Are you are able?

John Corcoran is an internationally featured speaker on literacy issues. To learn more about him and his work, see his web site at www.JohnCorcoranFoundation.com