

The Circle of Courage

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We drew a circle to shut them out
When we learned jargon we glibly spout.
In career-moated castles we safely hide;
The wounded and needy we've locked outside.

The school draws a circle to shut them out –
Disrespectful, disruptive, disturbed no doubt.
“If you're not here to learn, you need not stay.”
This lesson they master; we drive them away.



He draws a circle to shut us out.
Acting the rebel our power to flout.
Anger well masks his need to belong.
We cast him out, the capital wrong.

She draws a circle to shut us out.
Broken and sullen, her lips in a pout
We pretend not to hear the muted cries;
In hopeless desertion her spirit dies.



They draw a circle to shut us out.
An anxious bravado concealing their doubt.
Though looks full of loneliness beg us stay,
Our eyes do not meet; we hurry away.

Circles that close to keep others at bay
Can yet be redrawn to make “we” out of “they.”
Then surrounded by friendship, no longer forlorn.
Discouragement ends, and courage is born.



*Inspired by this verse by Edwin Markam:

“Outwitted”

He drew a circle to shut me out.
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win.
We drew a circle that took him in.

