

# The Little Boy

by Helen Buckley

Once a little boy went to school.  
He was quite a little boy.  
And it was quite a big school.  
But when the little boy  
Found that he could go to his room  
By walking right in from the door outside,  
He was happy.  
And the school did not seem  
Quite so big any more.

One morning,  
When the little boy had been in school a  
while,  
The teacher said:  
"Today we are going to make a picture."  
"Good!" thought the little boy.  
He liked to make pictures.  
He could make all kinds:  
Lions and tigers,  
Chickens and cows,  
Trains and boats –  
And he took out his box of crayons  
And began to draw.

But the teacher said:  
"Wait! It is  
not time to  
begin!"  
And she  
waited until  
everyone  
looked  
ready.  
"Now," said  
the teacher,  
"We are  
going to  
make  
flowers."  
"Good!"  
thought the  
little boy,  
He liked to  
make  
flowers,  
And he  
began to

make beautiful ones  
With his pink and orange and blue crayons.  
But the teacher said,  
"Wait! And I will show you how."  
And she drew a flower on the blackboard.  
It was red, with a green stem.  
"There," said the teacher.  
"Now you may begin."  
The little boy looked at the teacher's flower.  
Then he looked at his own flower,  
He liked his flower better than the teacher's.  
But he did not say this,  
He just turned his paper over  
And made a flower like the teacher's.  
It was red, with a green stem.

On another day,  
When the little boy had opened  
The door from the outside all by himself,  
The teacher said,  
"Today we are going to make something with  
clay."  
"Good!" thought the boy.  
He liked clay.  
He could make all kinds of things with clay:

Snakes and  
snowmen,  
Elephants and  
mice,  
Cars and trucks –  
And he began to  
pull and pinch  
His ball of clay.



But the teacher  
said,  
"Wait! And I will  
show you how."  
And she showed  
everyone how to  
make  
One deep dish.  
"There," said the  
teacher.  
"Now you may  
begin."

The little boy looked at the teacher's dish  
Then he looked at his own.  
He liked his dishes better than the teacher's  
But he did not say this,  
He just rolled his clay into a big ball again,  
And made a dish like the teacher's.  
It was a deep dish.  
And pretty soon  
The little boy learned to wait  
And to watch,  
And to make things just like the teacher.  
And pretty soon  
He didn't make things of his own anymore.  
Then it happened  
That the little boy and his family  
Moved to another house,  
In another city,  
And the little boy  
Had to go to another school.  
This school was even bigger  
Than the other one,  
And there was no door from the outside  
Into his room.  
He had to go up some big steps,  
And walk down a long hall  
To get to his room.  
And the very first day  
He was there, the teacher said,  
"Today we are going to make a picture."  
"Good!" thought the little boy,  
And he waited for the teacher  
To tell him what to do

But the teacher didn't say anything.  
She just walked around the room.  
When she came to the little boy,  
She said, "Don't you want to make a  
picture?"  
"Yes," said the little boy.  
"What are we going to make?"  
"I don't know until you make it," said the  
teacher.  
"How shall I make it?" asked the little boy.  
"Why, any way you like," said the teacher.  
"And any colour?" asked the little boy.  
"Any colour," said the teacher,  
"If everyone made the same picture,

And used the same colours,  
How would I know who made what,  
"And which was which?"  
"I don't know," said the little boy.  
And he began to draw a flower.  
It was red, with a green stem.

There is much wisdom in this simple and beautiful story that applies to all levels of our education ecosystem How can we expect learners to discover their own creativity if we expect them to wait until we have told them what we think it is? How can we expect them to be creative if we convince them, through our pedagogical practices, that they must only look for one right answer to a challenge that demands their creativity? And that the only learning that will be recognised is what we deem to be important. How can we expect them to create their own ecologies for discovering the many possible answers to their own creative challenges in life if we never give them a chance to create their own ecologies for learning while they are engaged in formal learning?

**CREATIVE CHALLENGE.**

**The end to this story is quite sad. Would you like to provide an alternative that opens up the possibility for this little boy for a more creative and fulfilling future?**

**Please share your alternative endings in #creativeHE**

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