

A Prayer/Pledge of Responsibility for Children

We pray (accept responsibility) for children
who put chocolate fingers everywhere,
who like to be tickled,
who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,
who sneak Popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who can never find their shoes.

And we pray (accept responsibility) for those
who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,
who never "counted potatoes,"
who were born in places we wouldn't be caught dead,
who never go to the circus,
who live in an X-rated world.

We pray (accept responsibility) for children
who bring sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,
who cover themselves with Band-aids and sing off key,
who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,
who slurp their soup.

And we pray (accept responsibility) for those
who never get dessert,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,
who watch their parents watch them die,
who can't even find bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,
whose monsters are real.

We pray (accept responsibility) for children
who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,
who like ghost stories,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse out the tub,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,
who squirm in church or temple and scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at and whose smiles can make us cry.

And we pray (accept responsibility) for those
whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move but have no being.

We pray (accept responsibility) for children
who want to be carried and for those who must,
we never give up on and for those who don't get a second chance.
we smother and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough
to offer it.

Adapted from Ina J. Hughs