

naughty parkie kids

depression and anxiety are two
really naughty special needs 1st graders
who can't read or write yet
can't imagine a world beyond
this-one-moment-right-here-right-now

language remains a toy box of sounds
to drump throw at each other
until one of them gets hurt starts kicking screaming

sometimes they find bits of crayon
will draw on the floor the walls other children
finally swallow a chunk too big to go
all the way down flail gasp for breath turn blue
one of the other kids shouts "teacher!"

and the adult in the room must
for the umpteenth time perform
the Heimlich maneuver on the tiny chest
or teach into the gagging mouth
or thump the twisted little back
or call 911 if the crayon is lodged that deep

while occupying the other children
who never stop being afraid
when these two get wound-up find trouble

these two require constant supervision
which is not the best word because
neither responds positively to being managed
they can spot a treatment strategy teaching technique
a mile away immediately conspire telepathically
to resist hold their breaths until they faint
dead away tangled together in the corner

do not confuse their linguistic cognitive issues
with a lack of clever intelligence beyond
the best trained professional you must be
subtler more honest emotionally all-in to care
for these post-toddler ragamuffin mischief-seekers

and if you don't *care* for them appropriately
with your heart-of-hearts the consequent chaos
will require more sick days than you're allowed
and you'll still have to go back to work with those two
who need what they need nothing can change that

keep them occupied work closely with a para-pro
or volunteer know where they are every single moment
recognize the first signs of trouble re-direct
and whatever else you do take care of yourself
go for long walks read write poetry sing lots of songs
(which they love too by the way) eat well
Avoid alcohol marijuana tobacco caffeine animal products
Meditate sleep all weekend if you must make love
Watch basketball on tv take another long walk

And do not forget all the others in the room
Who can help care too for those two ragamuffins
Care for you too for each other to the delight of all