



Speak to Me

By: Gitty Zee

Strolling into the store
On a sunny, spring day
My friend and I, looking for a robe
Began browsing the racks, my way

Black and white with gold flowers
With her words I saw the robes in my mind
Pink and white with polka dots
Let's see what else we can find

Into our peaceful world of shopping
Came a raspy, old voice in an attack
"Oh, she would look so nice
In the robe that's pink and white and black.

She needs a robe that's becoming
And light and easy to wear
A robe with a big zipper
And a material that won't easily tear"

The saleswoman continued
To share her unsolicited advice,
While I stopped and wondered,
Did she think she was being nice?

'You know that it's important
For such a person to look just right,
So she needs a robe
That will make her look sunny and bright"

'She?!' I sputtered
Don't you see that I'm right here?!
I know to you, intellectually disabled
Is how I appear

My eyes don't work like yours;
On my legs I am not so stable,
But to speak up for myself,
You bet that I am able!

It's crucial for you to know
I have a brain and I understand
You don't have to tell me what to wear,
Or what is the best brand

I know what I want,
I can make my own choices
I can think for myself
I know what my style is

You really need to learn
How you should react
When someone with a disability enters
your store -
Here's how you should act:

Never talk down to a person
Or treat them like they don't exist.
Speak directly to them
Use a normal tone of voice - on that I
insist

So the next time we do meet,
remember
That although I have a disability
No need to speak to my companion
I'm right here - speak to me