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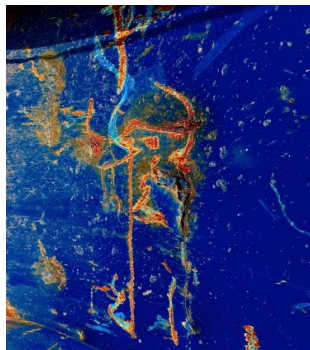
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Teaching: From the Inside Out

By Jeffrey Pflaum

I photograph myself
contained in four corners
as the sun's rays streak
across a whiteboard
highlighting me
in front of my lens
talking to children
listening to my self
as inward eyes
those invisible hubs
focus on a teacher:
Subject revealed
transparent in the light
face illuminated
now a split image
slightly overexposed.
I become the motivation
holding students' gazes
feeling their feelings
on a cool fall day:
I see my class
sitting calmly
in their golden auras
giving into the recognition
of us in another world.
I start thinking
of boundaries:
can they see inside?
discover their lives?
My camera snaps away
click, click, click, click
zooming in, zooming in
searching for the pictures
through miles of imagination
panning the mind's floors
from basements to attics
straight into consciousness
when everything erupts:
Past days are recaptured
explored in nature's glow
reflecting off the whiteboard
onto me and to the children.
These eyes wander all over

following the phantoms
haunting my students
as a long afternoon
of the blues unfolds:
Their penetrable orbs
expose one troubled tale
hidden behind another
humbling me instantly
through hostile winds
of oppressive years.
I am jammed
between coats of paints
on classroom walls
working out conflicts
coming from every corner:
I
am
the
stick
figure
spinning
disoriented
disappearing
ready
to
roar
into
my
lens.



These three photos were all taken by the author, as described in his poem.

Jeffrey Pflaum is a teacher-researcher-developer-experimentalist who has taught elementary/middle school students about their creativity and everyday lives. By helping kids understand their creative side, to be self-aware, focus, and discover self-motivation independently, they realize an organic purpose for learning. Once children penetrate these inside worlds, they begin to see themselves, others, and the world in fresh, imaginative, perceptive ways and recognize the possibilities in life. Coming this spring is my Emotional Intelligence and Social and Emotional Learning Project written for the Texas Home School Coalition website featuring over 135,000 members.