

UNTITLED

Stephen

Hi, my name is...

My name is the start of something being wrong, of me being wrong.

Teachers, nurses, doctors or the parents care staff, other children. They say my name when I am wrong.

Stop what you are doing!

Why did you do this!

Listen! Look! Sit! Stand! Be still! Join in! Leave alone! Participate! Do your work!
Wake up! Behave!

But to me, my name is the start of being confused.

What's up? What's wrong?

I am. I will, I can't. I don't understand.

I have very little memories of school. I believe that many of my memories are repressed, due to the environment being so hostile. But I do remember always being in the wrong, and not knowing why.

I would hear my name and get this deep feeling of uncomfortable warmth as I think, "What have I done?"

Still now I hear my name and get the same feeling and think, "What have I done?"

Sometimes my partner will shout at me from another room and instinctively I will apologize and ask, "What's wrong?"

Re·Vision

The Centre for Art and Social Justice

I have very little memories of school, but I do remember never really understanding my teacher, not understanding what to do, not understanding why I had not done it right, not understanding what was right.

Stephen means confusion.

Education means confusion.

My whole childhood was a world of confusion.

But... school doesn't have to be this way. People do not have to have disdain for their own name. Teachers can support and advocate. The memories I do have at school are of key people who support me by not confusing me, not making me anxious or stressed, not seeing me as wrong, but rather they tried to work with me, foster the strength within me.

These people did not have more money, more resources, more time than other features, but maybe they had more willingness, more willingness to listen, willingness to understand, willingness to try.

My name is Stephen and I ask, please, allow others to keep their name.

Don't allow their name to be taken.