

## **My Silent Friend**

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When I was about fifteen, I used to go to my friend Vick's house after playing ball. The first time that I went, Vick's mother was in a small bedroom feeding her invalid son, Billy.

Billy was unable to speak, walk or feed himself. He was nineteen years old and weighed about seventy pounds. He made a low hissing noise. He lay in a constant fetal position. One day, Vick asked me if I wanted to meet Billy. I said "Sure!" He took me into the little bedroom and there on the bed lay Billy. Vick said, "Hey Billy, this is Jack."

I nervously said, "Hi Billy." I noticed an immediate change in Billy's eyes, they were brighter and attentive.

It was mid-summer and in 1948 the small house had no air conditioning and was very hot!

The tiny fan on the night stand did little to cool the room. Billy was sweating excessively. There was a small bowl of water with a few melting ice cubes setting on the night stand. I picked up a wash cloth and dipped it into the cool water, wrung it out and wiped the sweat from Billy's forehead.

His light blue eyes quit rolling around and focused on me. I could sense the gratitude in Billy's eyes.

Many times after that, I would visit with Billy.

I would hold his hand, talk to him and sometimes give him a drink of water. "True friendship has no boundaries."

Jackie R. Kays

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NOTE: Not a poem, just a memory.