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## Jewelry Design

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*I am who I am*

KAREN CARLIN

I am who I am.  
I am my mother's daughter,  
Anyone can guess.  
The face she has is mine as well.  
Except for the gray-blue eyes,  
She gave me the mysterious brown,  
As if she knew the troubles they would hide.

I am who I am.  
At times it can be more a curse than a gift.  
Punishment should not have come because  
of a face I did not choose.

I am who I am.  
She had the courage to escape the abuse.  
She never knew I became her substitute,  
All because the face I have is hers as well.

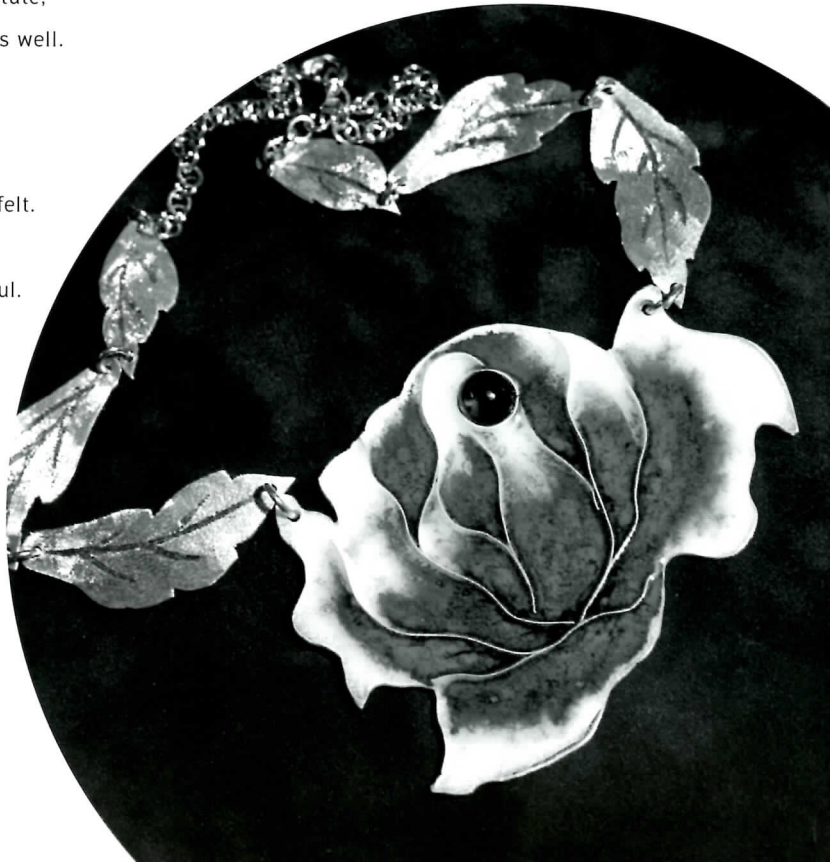
I am who I am.  
With a mind much unbalanced,  
Due to the things I saw, heard, and felt.  
My emotions, always very sensitive.  
Sadness seems to be a part of my soul.

I am who I am.  
I seem to need so very much,  
But I never dared to ask.  
There are words I need to hear.  
Words I never asked for.

I am who I am.  
I am my mother's daughter.  
Who she is, is much of who I am.  
To make her proud is all I want,  
It is all I need to hear.

I am who I am.

Jewelry Design  
JOAN DURRKE



*Editor's Note: With permission, I have chosen to include an actual TAKS test from a Collin County fourth grader. If hers is any indication, I daresay our educational system is alive and well and the future is bright and shiny. It is copied exactly as written. By the way, fourth grade translates to 10 years old.*

## TAKS Written Composition Grade 4

**BLAINE CATHEY**

Summer is my favorite time of the year. Unlike most children, my favorite place to go is to the community swimming pool. Other kids think Six Flags is much more exciting. Though they find other events more entertaining, swimming is what I say is the best. Actually, no other time I've gone swimming matches up to the time Pate (my sister), Majie (my soccer ball), and I went swimming.

I could already feel the burning sensation of sweat drip down my back and the sunscreen sting just from stepping out of the front door. Knowing that this trip was going to be extremely fun, I flung the toy sack over my shoulder, picked up Majie and took off to the pool with Pate following. Behind me I hear click-clock, click-clock of Pate's flip-flops beating against the concrete. Half way into the walk my shoulder began getting numb from the sack. As soon as I got past the gate, I quickly set my things down on a sun tan chair and leaped into the blue, cold, refreshing water. The water cooled me off as I dunked Majie into the pool and relaxed.

Suddenly I spotted my sister struggling with her floaties and ran over to help her. When I slipped on the last floatie she squirmed out of my arms, shouted, "Cannonball," and cannonballed into the chilly pool. Pate and I played games like torpedo toss and number tiles. I had all of my hidden tiles in the deep end because I can swim. Since Pate doesn't know how to swim all of her number tiles were in the shallow end where she is able to reach them. Seeing the

beautiful rainbow torpedo color's twirl in the water made me dizzy. After we got bored with playing torpedo toss and number tiles, I suggested that we throw Majie back and forth. We were the only ones at the community center so we swam around it in big circles trying to form a whirl pool but it was too big, we didn't have enough people, and there wasn't enough circulation.

I noticed the time on my waterproof watch, and it was time to go home. I told Pate that we were about to leave and we could only fit in one more game before we left. So I let Pate play whatever she wanted to while I played a quick game of basketball with Majie. It seemed like Pate had fun playing water hopscotch. She played in the seven inch shallow part of the pool using number tiles as the boxes. When it was exactly time to leave I packed up the toys and helped Pate take her floaties off. We got to the gate and were ready to leave with our heads hung low not wanting to go home. I held Majie in one arm with the toy sack in the other and took off to the house with Pate in front. This time instead of hearing click-clock, click-clock, I heard splash-splash, swoosh-swish, of the soaked flip-flops slapping against the concrete and no longer did the sunscreen sting and now sweat dripped down my back.

Now every time I go swim, I bring Pate and Majie along with me. I think it's just funner with some company to swim with. The community pool is always going to be my favorite place to swim and I just can't wait till tomorrow another day of swimming.