

It has been said that the eyes are the window to the soul. If so, Jon Christopher Meyers has given us a remarkable gift. It is the gift of sight. Look into the eyes of the people whose portraits he has so beautifully captured in this amazing book and you will be hard-pressed to ever again see in the same way the people in your life who experience disability. They may be family members, coworkers, or strangers passing on the street, but you will not be able to keep yourself from seeing them anew.

Anyone who spends time with these pages will be changed. But for families with sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, cousins, grandchildren, wives, husbands, partners, and parents with disabilities, this book will have special meaning and profound impact. In my own journey as sibling and caregiver for my brother James over the course of many years, I know that it took me too long to truly understand him—to see into his soul if you will. I had to learn to see past his very real challenges, appreciate him for his strengths, and embrace his fundamental humanity. That process was never-ending until the day he died.

That fundamental humanity of all people with disabilities has always been there, of course, despite the long, sordid, and unfortunately continuing history of institutionalization and segregation that Laura Dianne Dahill so ably lays out in her introduction. I have no end of admiration for my parents who in 1957 chose to ignore medical advice and raise James at home with his nine brothers and sisters. My parents, along with others, organized to advocate for people with autism and developmental disabilities in our community. Back then, there was no book to capture James's portrait and his story, and those of the many people with disabilities and their parents who lived heroically every day, asserting their rightful place in society. Now, thanks to the vision of The Arc Lane County, the artistry of Jon Christopher Meyers, and the word craft of Laura Dianne Dahill, there is such a book. We are all better for it.

I have always said I would give everything I have to spend just five minutes inside my brother's head, so I could truly see the world through his eyes. We do not yet have that ability, but these photos and the courageous stories of the people in this book bring us closer.

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