

ROBERT SHOOTER FROM BURNLEY - FINALIST

TO PAUL WITH LOVE

*1 Corinthians 13:11*

When a child I was abused like a child  
bullied, manipulated, silenced, neglected  
expected to meet parent need, be alert  
to grown up madness, badness, absenteeism  
tell lies to protect them. When I was a child  
I could not do as a child for I did not belong  
childhood had been taken away.

Adolescent revenge  
I was stronger than they  
had all the sway  
I would kill, maim, anybody, anything  
to get my own back,  
do unto them as they had done to me  
murder was in my soul

adoptive non-blood parents read me  
in spite of all my protestations  
they saw through me like a book  
confronted the monster  
till it gave in, escaped, produced joy  
a reached weeping prodigal.

I could not hate, try as I might, venom  
to blast the world had been defused,  
dissipated, was gone. I could  
give and receive love, forgiveness, trust,  
be a child if I wanted; now I belonged.