

Handicap and Equality

Peter Hammill

All men are born equal at the moment they arrive:
Check the limbs and senses we require to survive.
But some come deaf and dumb and blinded,
Some have damage to their brains;
Parents constantly reminded
That they'll never play the normal children's games.
They may not be normal,
But they're people just the same.

If Christ had been born defective
To fulfil the Father's plan
Would he be as easily accepted as God made man
Or does the human value alter
In the crippled human frame?
Though the tongue and fingers falter
Must we shut them out and shut them up,
And shut the case and whisper "such a shame".
That's how we shut them away.

Most of us are lucky,
Free from accidents at birth
But their victims share our right
To the inheritance of earth.
For all their grunts, their stumps, their tumours,
Their eternal wheelchairs,
We're the freaks, we're the inhumans,
If we close our eyes and turn aside,
Pretend that if we do they'll not be there...
They've got to face it, so we've got to face it.
Still, they've got to live with it
In a world we supposedly share.