

Mitzvah, Tsadaka

by Paul Turner

There were five foster families—

Mitzvah, tsadaka—

And one had a pressing vacation,

So four families took the burden—

Mitzvah, tsadaka—

For the child who came through like a convulsion

And landed on the ear like a blurt

Between story lines and curt allegiances—

Mitzvah, tsadaka.

Born of an observant Jewish mother and a singer wavering on affiliation,

The child who overheard the fosters' voices threading like an intimation—

Romped and waited, was often weighed and officially tested for the record—

Mitzvah, tsadaka—

For a release and an embrace,

For some peace,

For so-called permanence,

For shelter, love, no continuance,

In this nurturing life: *mitzvah, tsadaka.*