

Hello, You Must be Different

By Kirstin Thomson

1st Place in the 12-17 Age Category

For ages, no one could define my

invisible skin-itch

black/white tone

“look at me when I’m talking to you”

but

I

can’t

because

the peas are touching the mashed potato on my plate

and Dad’s not sitting in his usual seat

well, that was acceptable because children are

fussy

slow

shy

but this

disruption

attention-seeking

coldness

frosty playground circle.

abyss

where there is a horizontal and a vertical and where "back in a minute" means sixty seconds not some vague place between that and an hour.

Define it.

Once a rhetorical challenge,
parent to child / teacher to pupil
now a concerned question.

Closed. Now... open.

"Victim"

but I don't
suffer,
resent,
puzzle.

"Special needs"

insistent on alienating me

"don't be difficult"

but it is, isn't it?

Pinpointing exactly why I should be set apart.

Because I'm

"different"

the way everyone is.