**VICIOUS NUMBERS**

Numbers scared me

Like vicious dogs.

Step-dad might stop me at any moment

And demand the time be told

On the big number clock

Which lived on the kitchen wall.

Outside my body would freeze

Like a broken down robot

Inside the panic ran around screaming

*Fire, fire, fire.*

For a few sweets at playtime

Michelle would always mark my maths test

Adding a few correct answers

Not too many

Just enough

So I wouldn’t look stupid.

That worked very well

Until the teacher figured out

What was going on

And I was branded a cheat.

Numbers might as well have been Russian

My mind refused to hold onto them

No matter how hard I tried to concentrate

They fell through brain holes

Like slippery spaghetti.

Sometimes they’d swim around on the page

Performing perfect backstroke,

Refusing to behave.

I hate numbers.

Find them such vicious little things.

Kat Francois