

## Orphanage

There was a burrow under the wire-net fence  
looking as if it had been dug out  
by dogs or rabbits, where the small hands  
could reach through and join —

a cool and sweet-smelling place  
hidden in brush, a tunnel through scrub  
leading in. Even a boy of eight  
had to stoop or crawl, and so did a girl of nine

from the other side of the fence.  
And the others backed off, leaving two  
at a time alone for their interlaced fingers  
to be squeezed and their kiss through the fence

to be managed with lips of amazing agility.  
And even in winter the bush grew thick  
as if to hide and protect and make sure  
the tongue and thrill and skill

of touch was not wholly forgotten, did not  
utterly die, before the age of ten.