

**Martin Robertson**

## **Law Report**

This child was thrashed to death for thieving, lying  
and filthy habits which, the father said,  
were driving him and her mother nearly mad.  
The neighbours say: We knew that she was dying—

skin, bone and scared eyes, moving like a mouse  
in the dusk of walls, craved scraps of food and love  
—a sweet little girl—hanging's not bad enough—  
But who can know the darkness of that house?

A black brew of stupidity, distilled  
through stunted generations; yet moving in it  
a blindworm urge to love makes for a minute  
contact, perhaps; lost that, sinks choked and chilled,

changes to hate—for much more than each other:  
for life, which that lost spark has shown as spoiled.  
This darkness then was visited on the child;  
until they killed her, and the police took over.