## **Martin Robertson**

## The Green Children of Woolpit

Over beyond the river the children said was the shine of sunlight, on their side was shade.

Sound of church-bells was often in the air.

It was a Christian country, of that they were sure.

This came later. When they were found at the bottom of the pit hand in hand

blinking upwards, they did not speak. It seemed that they must die, unable to eat

anything put before them, till someone saw the girl nibbling a hard green cast-out shell.

Coaxed into feeding with raw husk and stalk they lost some of their wildness, learned to talk—

the boy less than the girl.
The boy did not live,
went down where they came from
through the pit of the grave,

while greenness receded from his sister's skin. She grew up, and married a man from Lynn.

This poem is reprinted from Now and Then, the website devoted to the poetry of Martin Robertson, at http://rtnl.org.uk/now\_and\_then/

But whether with the green the memory of that country faded the story does not say,

nor whether her children were common girls and boys or brought shimmering shadows to the griefs and joys

of life in the flat fields under the sky's breadth from their mother's dark sources past that laboured earth.