The Misunderstood Child  A poem about children with hidden disabilities  

by Kathy Winters

I am the child that looks healthy and fine.  I was born with ten fingers and toes.  But something is different, somewhere in my mind,  And what it is, nobody knows.

I am the child that struggles in school,  Though they say that I'm perfectly smart.  They tell me I'm lazy -- can learn if I try --  But I don't seem to know where to start.

I am the child that won't wear the clothes  Which hurt me or bother my feet.  I dread sudden noises, can't handle most smells,  And tastes -- there are few foods I'll eat.

I am the child that can't catch the ball  And runs with an awkward gait.  I am the one chosen last on the team  And I cringe as I stand there and wait.

I am the child with whom no one will play --  The one that gets bullied and teased.  I try to fit in and I want to be liked,  But nothing I do seems to please.

I am the child that tantrums and freaks  Over things that seem petty and trite.  You'll never know how I panic inside,  When I'm lost in my anger and fright.

I am the child that fidgets and squirms  Though I'm told to sit still and be good.  Do you think that I choose to be out of control?  Don't you know that I would if I could?

I am the child with the broken heart  Though I act like I don't really care.  Perhaps there's a reason God made me this way --  Some message he sent me to share.

For I am the child that needs to be loved  And accepted and valued too.  I am the child that is misunderstood.  I am different - but look just like you.