

Wendy Cope - Tich Miller

*Tich Miller wore glasses
with elastoplast-pink frames
and had one foot three sizes larger than the other.*

*When they picked teams for outdoor games
she and I were always the last two
left standing by the wire-mesh fence.*

*We avoided one another's eyes
stooping, perhaps, to re-tie a shoe-lace
or affecting interest in the flight*

*of some fortunate bird, and pretended
not to hear the urgent conference:
'Have Tubby!' 'No, no, have Tich!'*

*Usually they chose me, the lesser dud
and she lolloped, unselected,
to the back of the other team.*

*At eleven we went to different schools.
In time I learned to get my own back,
sneering at hockey players who couldn't spell.*

Tich died when she was twelve.