

Nothing to hide (yet)

On my wall hangs a picture of a child,
taken when she was still very young,
and not yet one year old.

It is nothing but a snapshot,
though one I took with care.

It captures her, then still very young,
in spirit: this is she,
and part of her will always be that she,
though life and love's
fortune and misfortune
might well contrive to intimidate
and not encourage that she show that she.
Or perhaps it will.

She sits, looking up at me,
on the kitchen floor, her gaze direct,
direct, direct, as direct
as only a child can be direct,
who has nothing to hide,
and is curious: what is he doing?

She is older now, more civilised, still as cute
but now and then the cuteness is intended.
She's learning how to get her way.
Now she is less inclined to have her picture taken,

and not at all inclined to gaze direct.

I am favoured when we are alone to play,
fit a jigsaw, watch Shaun the Sheep and Mr Bean,
and I read tales to her and do the voices.

I am unfavoured and relegated to limbo
when someone else is there to do her bidding.

So I pray this little lass will not spoil and be spoiled.
I'll always trade directness for a cutesy smile.
They do not and never will get on.