



SOWER 1977

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AWARDS

Joseph Langland Award for Poetry:

from **flatwater calendar** Renae Johnson

Kaj Munk Memorial Award for Translation:

On a Hike (Auf Wanderung) by Hermann Hesse . . . translated by Mark Christensen

Hal Evens Cole Award for Excellence in the Arts:

BALL, MASON JAR . . . relief print Elizabeth Petersen

Shapes
Silver-grey and stream-lined,
Silhouetted
Against winter-spring sun,
Sandhill cranes.

River
Relaxed and roving,
Refreshes
Resting and reverent birds,
Roaming migrants.

Eventide
Evanescent day
Ending
Everlasting wind-borne flight,
Evensong.

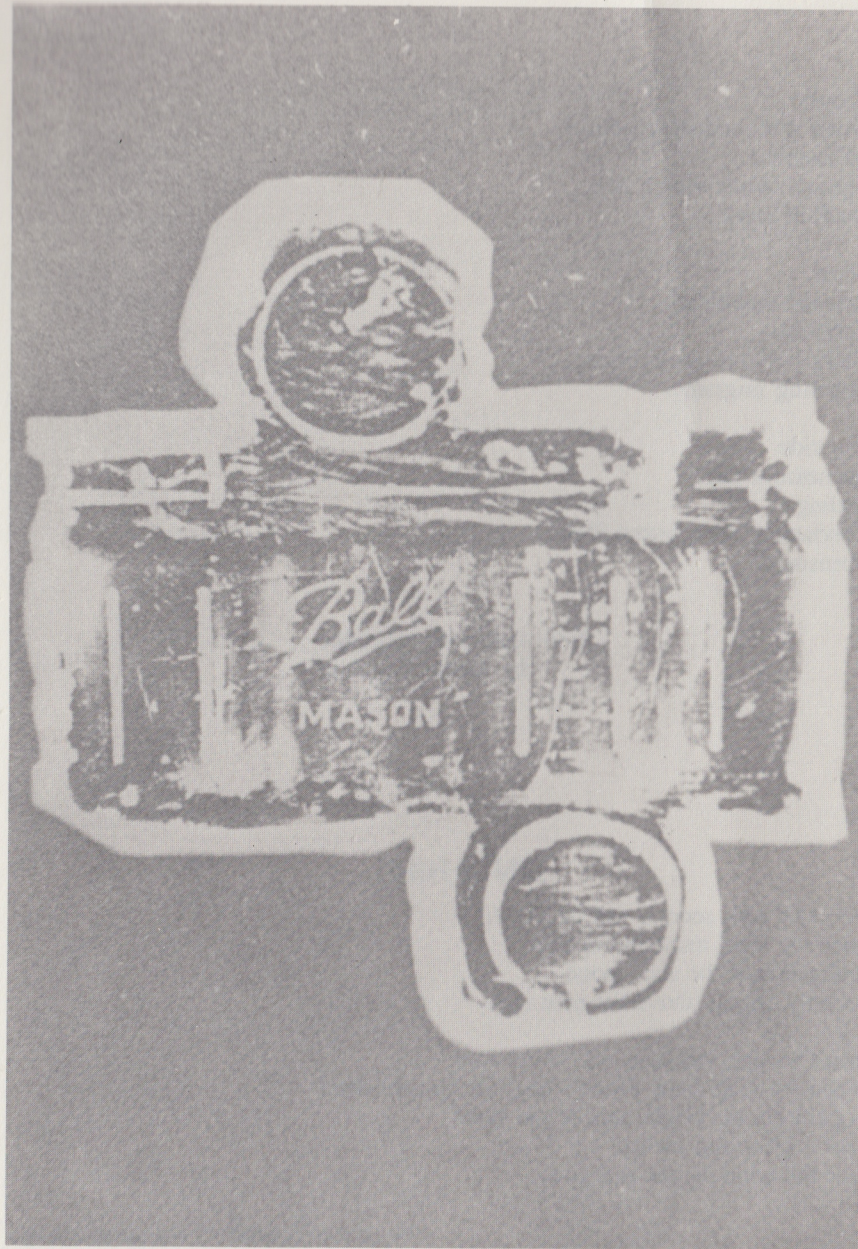
from **flatwater calendar**
by **Renaë Johnson**

ON A HIKE

Don't be sad, soon it will be night,
Then we shall rest hand in hand
And see how the cool moon
Secretly laughs above the pale land.

Don't be sad, the time will come soon
When we shall have peace. Our little crosses stand
In pairs on the bright side of the street
And it rains and snows,
And the wind comes and goes.

from the German of Hermann Hesse
by **Mark J. Christensen**



"Ball, Mason Jar"
relief print Eliz Petersen

SUMMER RAINLESS

dry

no rain

dry.

anxious squinting eyes

dart

involuntarily

to the barren blue northwest

no clouds to hope on.

once lush dark green broad leafed corn

now dry green pale leaves curl

droop over baked loam, broad cracks

that let the sun reach down

to squeeze out mercilessly every last drop

of the earth's life blood

to rob the corn of nourishment

whose sinuous roots desperately grope

for water

turn the faucet

fill the sink

splash off the sweat that collected

like dew on the fine upper lip hairs

on the tight tender red forehead

on bleached eyebrows

slake the thirst with a tall mug

of iced tea

with lemon

look out at the fields

smell the corn cook and burn

hear it crackle and bend

see it shrivel and die.

drought

no rain.

Lori Nielsen

THERE IS NO REPLY

Thin, jagged clouds,
Turned radiant and violent in hues of fire
By a now foregone star of energy.

Water, reflecting the sky,
Yet maintaining its soft pastel of green;
White foam rushes to shore wetting the brown sands,
Soaked yet still thirsty.

Upon these sands struts a lonely gull,
Pecking the earth seeking treasures beneath
Its smooth surface; It cries aloud,
There is no reply.

Howard L. Kulzer

PORTRAIT OF A CITY

a foliage plant
with genuine peppermint scent
was there —
and hairy gooseberries
cabbage with caterpillars and
bunches of sour grapes
hanging from an arbour

but that was only the garden

in the street
the traffic was forced to stop
then, like a herd of sheep, it drove along
over the whole city
was a spicy smell
that came from the marjoram factory

(with marjoram, one could, by the way,
make a business
shortly after the currency reform)

from the German of Annemarie Zornack
by **Jean Hansen**



"Egg Carton"
pencil drawing **Kim Cooper**

THE TREE

The sun set over a day that might have been
But no one understood

Bouquets of flowers never brought
Souls passed by but never touched

A tree reached out and up,
 Surrounding only the windless
 sigh of nothingness
And no one understood

The night lingered on
 Starless — Smothering what was left
And finally with one last breath —

 it
 was
 blown
 away.

The tree crying deep within grasped
 once more to touch an unseen Hope
 THEN
 the Hope reached down, transforming
 what was into what could have never been
And as the day dawned,
 the tree stood still, knowing that at last

 Someone
 understood.

Charlene Dirks

Its such a fine day
I think I'll slip away
into thoughts and passions
of dreams and mansions
of things to come and be
just let the world walk way from me
and once again set my spirit free
for in this world of faultless fate
men lie and die to only live and hate
for only in a dream I can find
that I can be me and my mind be mine.

Les Redinbaugh

"HE" COMES

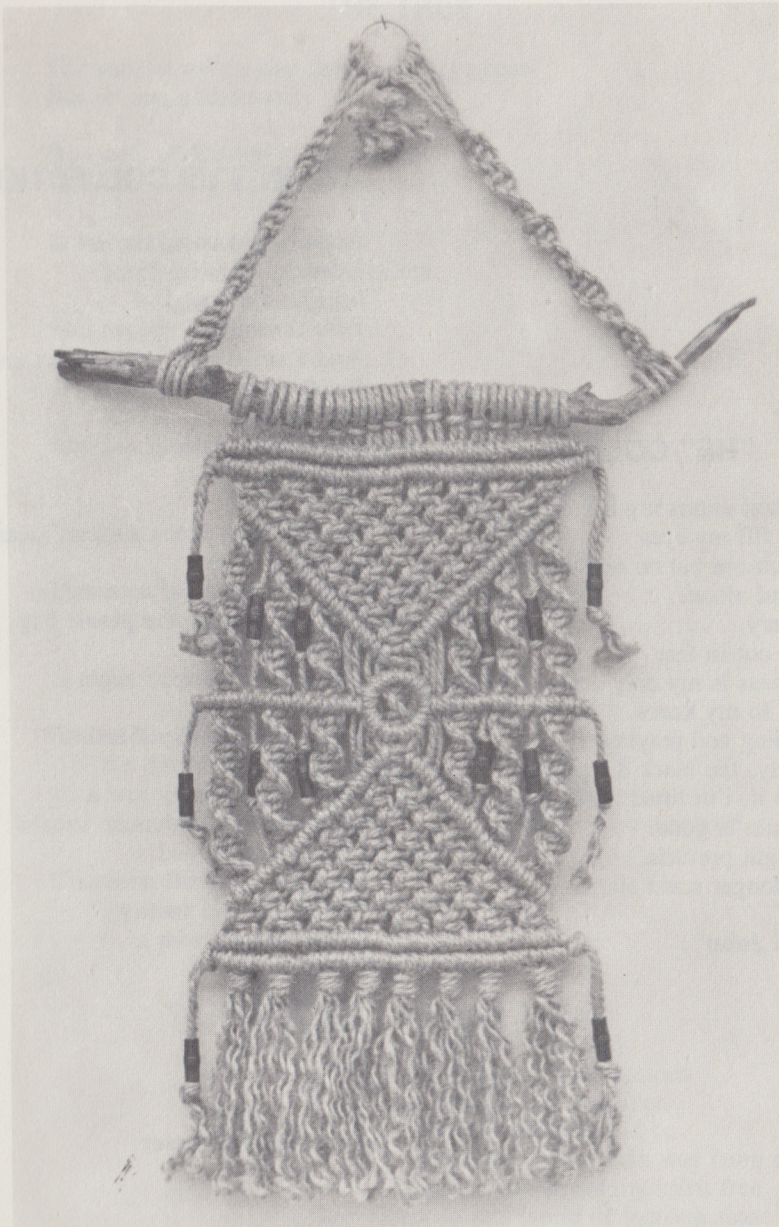
Turmoil enters my life,
tears fill my eyes
i reach out but no one's there.
I stand alone,
Solitary. . . .
I cry out in fear
darkness is my only echo.
I fall to my knees,
pleading and praying.
Slowly, the black disappears,
I feel it, i'm lifted off my knees,
the pain is gone,
the light prevails,
i no longer stand alone.

Sheri John

TAKING UP COLLECTION

Action must be taken
I decided.
So I took a thread of
Pure sunshine
And a small piece of blue sky and
Put them in a big
Plastic bag
But I didn't close it
With a twistie
Yet
Because then I took a clear, clean
Teardrop of dew
And the green leaf it rested on
And put them in the plastic bag
Too. . . .
And when I finally caught a
Big blue whale
And when I finally found a
Real live cloud
And when I finally saw a
Lovely, lonely mountain stream
I took them all and
Put them in my
Plastic bag and swiftly
Closed it tight with a
Twistie
And then I
Shut my eyes
And
Prayed

Karla Bergstraesser



Macrame wall hanging Gary Beltz

SUMMER SKY

I lie on my back in the rustling grass
and follow the sky's play.
Oh, this is the perfect summer sky
reflecting the wandering day.

Oh, to be a sailing cloud
in changing sun and storm
set free amid the sky above
and fading without form.

Happily follow their fleeting game
before the sky's playings change
and come to nothing in the summer sun
and never exist again.

from the Danish of Piet Hein
by Lisa Sorensen

I BUILT THIS CASTLE . . .

I reached down, and there was so much.

I brought up handfuls, and I had to use
Both hands
To gather and grasp and raise some up. . .

Rich and dark — moist, fresh knowledge.

And I dumped it in my sandbox.

It dried.

It dried into little sands . . .
Millions and millions of little sand
Grains . . . experiences . . . feelings . . .

Dry.

And I sat in my sandbox with all my
Dry bits of information.

What to do?

I took some sweet syrup
And poured it all over,
And I could shape and mold it. . .

Little sand grains sticking together with syrup. . .

I built this castle.

It was a dreamy, fairyland castle
With turrets and drawbridges,
And I made it.

It was so fantastic . . .

All the little sands stuck together
Until I was done.

What do you think?

All of them — every one of them that made up my castle
Turned into bubbles . . .
Billions of tiny bubbles . . .

And they all floated away. . .

There went my castle.

And I sat in my sandbox
With no more sand and sticky hands.

What to do?

I wiped off my hands and . . .

I reached down, and there was so much.

I brought up handfuls, and I had to use

Both hands

To gather and grasp and raise some up. . .

Karla Bergstraesser

Photograph . . . : Jane Devasure



FOR THE TIME BEING

I didn't make it, did I?
I can see it in your eyes.
That the strength I should have had
that I had just yesterday
didn't last.
I didn't make it, did I?
I couldn't take all the pressures
Strange, I made it through the crisis
But something so unimportant broke the wall
that held back all those tears.
I didn't make it, did I?
You're thinking that I'm a fake.
Maybe you're right.
Maybe that strength came
from the person I want to be
And this morning I put on the wrong person.
Oh, maybe I could make things right
for awhile
I could dry my tears
And tuck away my fears for the time being
But I know that someday it would happen again.
Because sometimes things just get to be too much.
So,
I guess I didn't make it, did I?

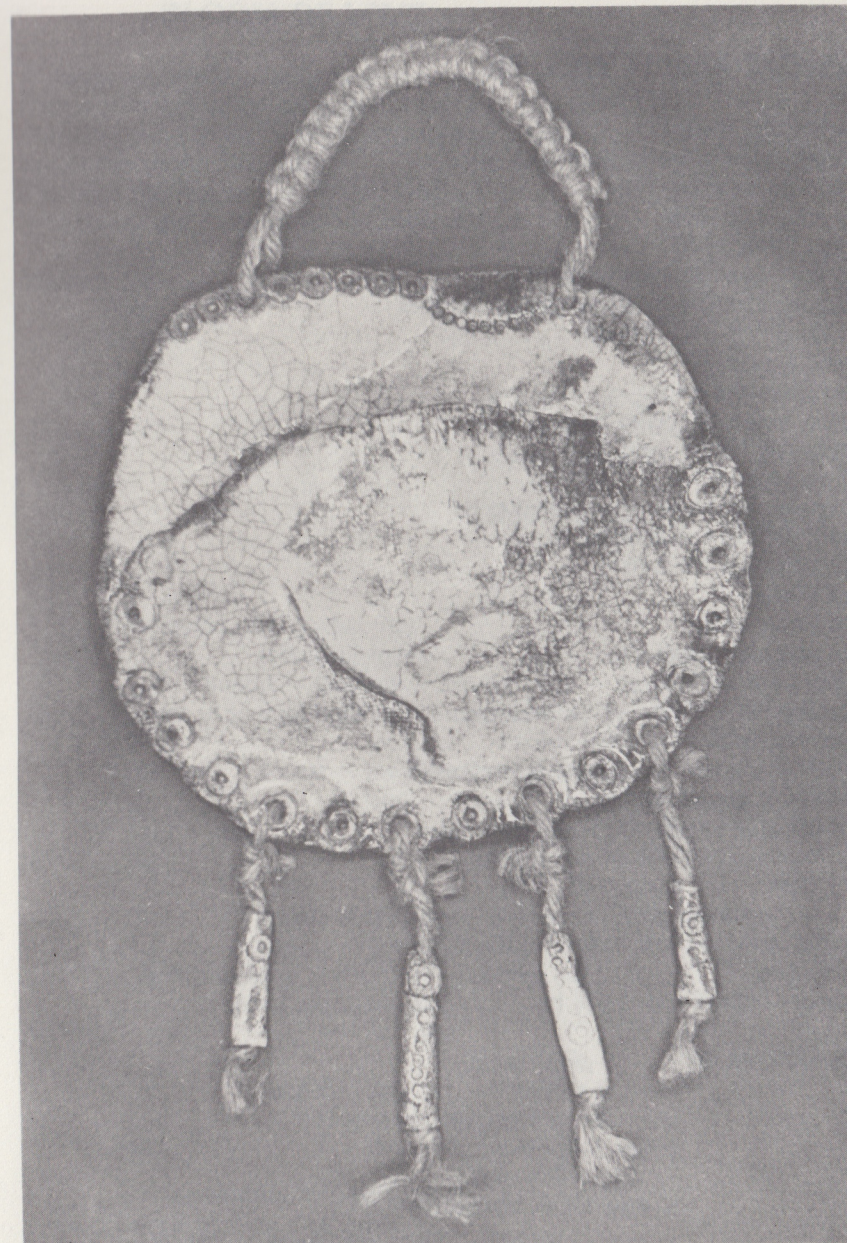
Patty Reed

PRAYER

God, send what you will,
Pleasure or Pain.
I am contented that both
Come from your hands.

Don't overwhelm me
Either with joy
Or with suffering!
For somewhere in between
Lies mature moderation.

from the German of Edward Mörike
by **Dennis Preston**



"Raku"

Ceramic Wall Form . . . Eliz Petersen

BELIEVE AND IT WILL BE.

The special place
kept secret in the back of your mind
will come to be, soon
It's real, you know
just think on it
Let your mind sort the thoughts
Let your imagination fit the pieces together
Dream Dream
It will appear –
as you want it to
Ideals, hopes, fantasies –
they will all be there
All because of you –
The place you've always wanted to be
will drift in and absorb you,
settle you in its flow
You'll live –
as never before
in complete happiness
Ageless you will reign
basking in the glow of contentment
Cruel words have been left behind
only true wisdom and knowledge remain
And you accomplished it
everlasting paradise
love happiness
joy peace
contentment
You've found the lost horizon
It's so easy –
simply believe and it will be.

Scot Kirkegaard

One-liter glass mugs
Brim with gold fermented grain –
Leaves a white moustache.

Lori Nielsen

BLOOM OF LOVE

A dream sprouting, starting to grow
from a seed that you planted within me
This dream is just a could be wish, nothing more
But in this dream I find hope
The hope that maybe our sprout of today
Will bloom and be our love of tomorrow

Warren Riley

I look in the lake
as we stare at each other.
Again the moon lost.

Roy Wuchter

Honest, that's what they
tell us all to be.
honest – they say – tell the truth – they
say – as they sugar-coat the glories of
war. . .
honest – they say through clenched
teeth – honest – i love my fellow
man – (but he's not as
good as me – he's a funny
color). . .
honest – they say – i want to help,
but . . . i jest can't afford to
give anything – they say – as they buy
a new Caddie and just
one
more drink. . .
honest – they say – i believe in
democracy, but not for you. . .
and yeah, equal rights and all
that – they say –
silent add – not now –
honest – i believe in God – they say –
when i need him – but – they say –
i did this all myself.
honest – they say honest.

Jean Hansen



"The Human Race"
silkscreen . . . Monique Bentzinger

A TIME FOR DEATH AND A TIME FOR LIFE

The upturned faces revealed all the agony of the universe over their first meeting with death. At ages five, seven and eight, the children couldn't comprehend the full impact of the event that had just occurred. With trusting eyes, they looked at me as if by miracle I could bring their beloved puppy to life again. I looked away, ashamed to realize I had failed them.

The puppy, a Christmas present, not yet a year old, had run out in front of a moving car. The skid marks lasted for at least two feet but the stain of blood showed that it had been too late to stop.

The body, hidden in a paper sack, was placed tenderly in the protecting shelter of the garage. A circle of clean, cold concrete divided it from the clutter of active life.

My mind was hopelessly blank on what to do, but the children knew. From television, they had learned that loved ones were buried and there had to be a funeral. Karen, the oldest one, organized and gave directions to the other two; Sarah was to make the tombstone and Arnie to dig the grave. Karen, herself, set about preparing the music and selecting the most fitting words to be said at graveside. To me was left the job of preparing the body for internment.

An old snow-boots box and a scrap of slightly yellowed bedsheet were not hard to find. Some crumpled newspaper stuffed around the edges and into the corners and covered by the sheet made a soft but sad final resting spot for the body. Silk would have been fitting, for the puppy had become a part of the children's lives and even my own. I could feel the chunk missing from my heart by the tight, aching emptiness inside me. I received the approval of the kids, then went out to the lonely garage. My business there didn't take long, but they were waiting when I came back in. I handed the cardboard coffin to Arnie for he had been delegated to carry it out.

The solemn procession moved silently to the sheltered corner of the yard in single file with the youngest followed by the other two in birth order. They fulfilled their role of mourners with bowed blond heads and solemn eyes. Strains of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" coming from the old cracker box record player sounded strangely appropriate to the situation. I wondered if the puppy would be one of the twinkling stars that night. It was cool and damp under the evergreen trees in the quiet corner. The spot was chosen because it had always been one of the puppy's favorite places. The earthy, clean smell of freshly turned dirt blended with pungent evergreen and freshly picked roses from the garden. The soft, depressed sound of the eulogy drifted lightly through the air and into the heavens. "He was the best dog in the whole world." A few more sobs and another attempt to put feelings into words and then it was all over.

The trio covered the box with soft clods of dirt. They smoothed and patted the loose mass down and added a layer of pine needles and roses. The record player marked time with its scratch, scratch, scratch at the song's end as the group lined up and marched away from the tiny monument.

Fifteen minutes later, back in the front yard, the mood changed. The children held a conference and voted to go ride bikes on the tennis courts at the school. As the distance widened between us, I heard the delicate sounds of laughter. I puzzled over the wonders of childhood. I longed to return to where it was possible to concentrate so hard on death, then turn and concentrate with the same strength on life.

RAINY DAY MAN

Rainy day man
don't come home
no more
to a room full
of junk and
noise.
Rainy day man
runnin' away
from nothin'
and old ghostly dreams
of fame and
fortune.
Rainy day man
looses
his game of Life as
time
runs
out. . .

Jean Hansen

WISDOM OF TREES

There is great security in a tree.
The brute bark and supple leaves
grasp for chunks of heaven while
the sinuous tenuous roots
rest securely in solid earth.

Lori Nielsen

ALONE

There lead over the earth
Many paths and roads.
But all of them have
The selfsame goal.

You may travel and ride
In twos and in threes
But the final step you must
Travel alone.

Thus, there is no learning
Or knowledge so good,
As that everything difficult
Is done alone.

from the German of Hermann Hesse
by Kim Neve



Photograph . . . Sherry Borglum

THE GOAL

I have always gone without purpose.
Would I ever find rest?
For my paths seemed endless.

Then I saw my wandering circles,
And wearied of the aimless trip.
My life was transformed that day.

I go now with hesitation toward a goal.
For I know, along my every journey
Lies death, bidding me its outstretched hands.

by Jim Borden

from the German of Hermann Hesse

END OF DAY

Lonely stands the boat
Waves slapping its red hull
— End of day.

Howard L. Kulzer

In old age
the love was wound around
with blindfolds
until it revolved
helpless
in solar eclipse.

But deep
in the ocean's movement
unrest lifts
and sinks itself
in the crossed wings.

Death
scarcely matured
is already newly fertilized
from graves
that draw out the oil of sacredness.

Stars
in the resurrection
burn out the darkness.

Again God is ready to set out.

from the German of Nelly Sachs
by **Barb Kahlandt**

FACES IN THE NUDE

Bathe him.
Dress him.
Make-up.
Accept me as I am?
Never!

May I come without costume?
Not admitted!
Put on your mask.
Decorate.
Glorify.
Display.

As I meet my most despised enemy
do I dare show truth?
Socially immoral!
When I see my friend,
may I tell him what I think?
Detestable!

Put on your mask.
Be fake.
Flatter.
Ornament.

I can't, it's not me!
You'll lose.
I won't!
You lost.

My God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Put on your mask.

Roy Wuchter

THE TOWER

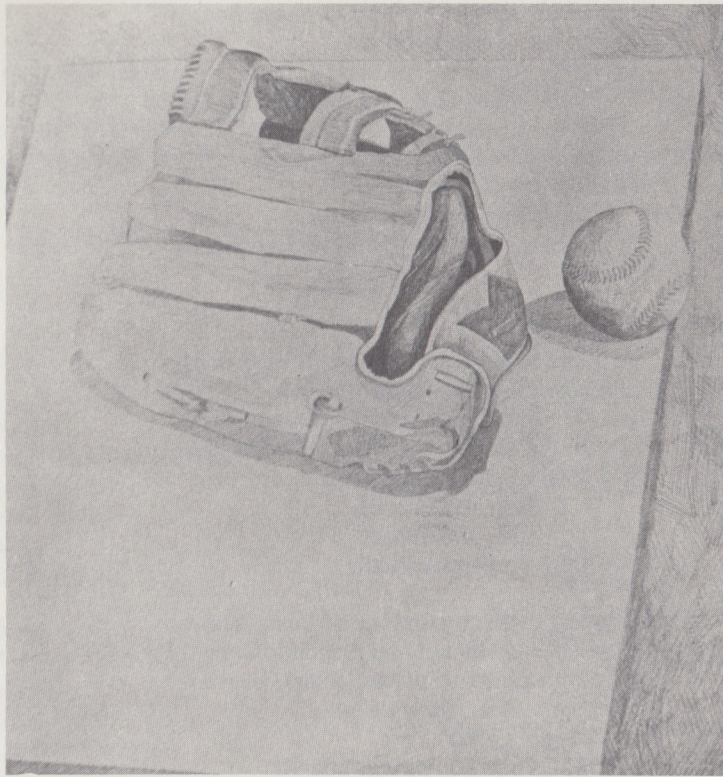
one tower to keep her
one tower to hold her virgin, untouched
one tower of ivory formed
all in the stroke of one spell cast
and woven deep and true into the fabric
of her earliest days
sunny days that ran lightly past her
like a silver-throated brook
splashing crystal
seeking ultimately low-settling places
to rest

sweet princess!
how sad to have no freedom of blue skies
that beckon, and beckon
and gay fields, and laughter unaware
you laugh, in silent grey-stoned halls
and your laughter echoes like a lost thing
lost, and echoes
lost, and echoes
down the grey-stoned halls

how sad to catch glimpses of lands faraway
to wonder, to dream and maybe to hope
for the shimmer of distant colors, blurred
as objects seen under water
or through a glass
and the thunder of strange sounds
lost, and they echo
lost and echo
down the grey-stoned halls

and princess
do your books ever tempt you
to think of love?
(the cheap romantic love that books tell)
cover to cover, you imagine hearts
beating, muffled
held closely in reign
muffled
as the sobbing in the night
lostly echoes
lost, and echoes
down the grey-stoned halls. . .

Kathy Swensen



"Baseball & Glove"
pencil drawing Kim Cooper

TIME FOR TEARS

Slowly I moved toward the furry body lying near the garbage heap. It couldn't be Coonie — it just couldn't! But already I knew what my mind refused to accept. Turning the cold stiffened body over, I saw the familiar masked face, yet different with the frozen expression of death. Still in the numbed state of shock with no feelings, I started to head in the general direction of the house, my thoughts flashing back to the first time Coonie had entered our lives.

Daddy had been choring one morning in the early spring when he heard a human-like cry coming from the cattle lot. Thinking that Cindy or I had managed to slip out of the house and were in danger of being mauled by the herd, he rushed over but could see nothing. The crying continued, till finally he spotted its source. A small, tiny, wet raccoon clung to one fence post where it had apparently climbed to escape the fate of his siblings, as the cattle had trampled them to death in the mud. Not seeing the mother around, he brought the small creature up to the yard to join the numerous other animals we claimed for pets. The raccoon was placed in a small metal cage, and Cindy and I were warned to keep fingers out of all holes, as this was not just another cat, but a wild animal. By early afternoon however, our fear of the creature was subsiding, anything that could fit into such a small cage couldn't really hurt us. So we dragged him out to play, but he seemed to want only to sleep. Finally deciding he must be hungry, we held down to him a very tame cat that had just lost her own litter, so he could try to nurse. And thus he existed, doing little but eating and sleeping for the first few weeks.

Nothing remains constant and our small furry friend was no exception. Cindy and I had originally named him Connie, but since he did indeed turn out to be a him, it was changed to Coonie and thus he went through life. As Coonie grew, he became more mischievous, his bandit's mask fitting well his habits. He loved eggs, and it became common practice to see him flying out of the cave with yellow yolk pieces still clinging to his whiskers, and tell-tale shells clenched in his small padded hands.

Though he was tame to some extent, Coonie was not a domesticated animal, nor did we try to make him such. He was a wild animal, that was his natural state, and that he remained, free to come and go as he pleased. As the summer months passed and Coonie became larger, he also began wandering more. He slept during the day and even when we would wake him to play, he would only climb onto our shoulders, bury his head in our hair, and doze away again. Soon he didn't return from his wanderings every night, and one to two weeks would pass before he would again visit to have his stomach filled with marshmallows, sugar smaks, and much to the dismay of my parents, usually a few eggs.

And now . . . reality returned and I rushed headlong into the house. Mom would make everything all right, she just had to. Perhaps Mother had been watching out the window, or maybe just with a mother's instinct, she sensed something wrong, but she met me at the door already trying to ease my childish hurt.

My words tumbled over each other, faster and faster the questions came. "Was it Coonie? What happened? Why? Can anyone help him? Why? Why? Why?"

Slowly she pulled me onto her lap, her voice quiet and sad, her eyes moist as she spoke, "You know Coonie was a wild animal and we never tried to make him anything different. We were lucky enough to know him for awhile, but he was still wild. Last night your father and I caught him in the eggs again, but this time he turned on us. Daddy had to shoot him, if it had been one of you girls, he might have really hurt you and we couldn't take that chance, we just couldn't."

"No," I cried wriggling out of the protective arms, "No, he wouldn't have hurt us. He wouldn't have, I know him. I know he wouldn't."

The dam welling up inside me broke and all my tears and sorrows spilled out. Later, perhaps I would listen to her reason and be comforted, but now I only had room for my tears.

Bonnie Sand

TO GO BEYOND

Lord, I am a rationalist.
Please forgive me.
I need security for my life
And I tend to find it
In understanding,
In wrapping words and
Tangible thoughts around
Events and feelings.
And thus, Lord, I
Show my weakness
In not being able to
Place my trust
Completely in You.
Lord, please forgive.
Help me to transcend
My reasoning.

Patricia Zabel

Dream softly
come quietly
to me through
your mind
but don't awaken me . . .
I need the extra
minutes of sleep
away from reality —
and you —
to keep my sanity
Sleep gently
morning will come
soon enough
for us both.

Jean Hansen



Photograph Sherry Borglum