

WATERCOLORS

Carefully selected brush poised
at the ready
to break through the plane,
unseen
the tension mounts

Large rough textured surface of
pristine vastness, waiting for the feel
of the first embrace of brush
full of color to leave its mark
upon the sheet, specially prepared
for just this moment.

Difficult to find a weakness
in the coating of tension, to force
the brush through the unseen plane,
to be the first splash, spot, stroke
or line of color.

Now it is done, never to be pristine
again. As the colors blend, meld, run
and mix together, or purposely kept
separate, enthusiasm mounts anticipating
the finished work, to see if it matches
or exceeds the painting that has been
in the mind for so long.

--Laurel Sierra Katie Rose Forest



HANDS

His hand lays simply
on the blanket, brown eyes
lock onto mine.

I take the leathery bones,
twisted in the shape of tools he's
held and examine each callous.
I feel hands smoothing soil back
from the hollow where peas
will be precisely placed.
His fingers squeeze the tiny clods
into dust, delighting in the feel.
The peas roll out of the hand
evenly spaced; his shade of soil
hand tamps the dirt.

The large hand pushes the soft coat
of brown and white, moving it away
from the barn wall, squeezing in
with the milking stool and bucket,
the rhythm begins. I bend to see
the hand, sheathed in brown
transparency, producing white suds,
blood pumping through veins rising
above the skin like red
interstate on the map.
Finally, his hands wield the
shovel, manure flies like saucers
out the barn door. Grasping the
fork, his hands direct straw in a
circular pattern.

Hurried steps bring him into the
house with hand dripping blood.
Under the kitchen faucet, water
mingles with blood until I see the
thumb loosely hanging to the side,
skin savagely slit. Congealing
blood allows the bandage.
The hurt was only mine; he orders
coffee.

We take the path overlooking the
river; his hand placed trustfully
in mine. His leaning tower of Pisa
makes me laugh. We sit like the
very old on the bench, sun
reflecting off the brown pool of
his eyes; sitting close, my inner
child spins in the warmth.

His cool hand pulls me close to his
face; he whispers that he can't
get up. Hot tears drip on the
sandpapery hand as his grip slowly
releases. I gather his spirit
in my hands.

Jean Marshall

Hand in the Dark

Bleakness of night
Absence of light
Distinctly I heard the sound of a lark
Then felt assured by a hand in the dark

Wandered around
Chasing some sound
Pretty soon I got lost in the park
Then I took hold of a hand in the dark

Lonely and sad
Hungry and mad
A friendly face to which I did hark
Then I held onto a hand in the dark

Tired and hurt
Down in the dirt
I felt a pain that was savage and stark
Then was relieved by a hand in the dark

Help me, I cried
Hear me, I sighed
A creature began to howl and bark
Then I was saved by a hand in the dark

Bleakness of night
Absence of light
A switch was pulled and I saw a spark
Holding hands that were not in the dark

Matt Russel

