

yet it was all there and had to be faced.

One day in October she called me. As she began the topic about her quilt, my mind started spinning and I felt my heart beat quicken. It seemed so terrible and terrifying to be face-to-face, talking about the beautiful quilt and at the same time talking about her imminent death. I was so busy trying to keep calm that I don't remember how she began the subject. All I remember is she was trying to comfort me; she must have known it would be most difficult for me to talk about her going away; she must have known that there'd be disappointment of some kind that I'd been deprived of making a quilt for someone I loved; she must have known how difficult it is to worry about saying the right thing. It was as if she was apologizing and making excuses for having to cancel the order — all so as I

wouldn't feel rotten.

Then it was my turn to try to tell her to not feel badly about that — that, from my point of view, that was not the issue. Certainly I understood her concern that I'd be doing it for nought if I did it for her — even though that's not the way I felt about it.

As we talked, however, an idea came to me, a sort of compromise whereby she could get what she wanted — sort of — and I could get what I wanted — sort of. I reminded her that I had kept the first "Geese Quilt" which I had made. (The second one I had given to Norman). What I wanted was for her to use my quilt. She could use it on her bed, hang it on a wall, enjoy it in any way she wanted. When she felt she had "used it up" or when she wanted to give it back to me, she could. It was like, while she was alive she could

enjoy it, and when she could no longer enjoy it, I could have it back.

This compromise suited her. We made a date when I'd come for a visit and bring the quilt over.

As it turned out, she kept it for 2-1/2 months. Towards the end of November she phoned me to set a date for another visit. By now her illness was draining her of her spunk and energy. She handed me the quilt, neatly folded. We were both feeling very pleased that the spirit of the quilt had been fulfilled, but we were both saddened by the fact that she would soon have to leave us.

I continue to make quilts, inspired and spirited by the encouragement and support that Margaret so lovingly gave me. It is in her memory and in the spirit of our ancestors that I continue to quilt.

**Editor's Note:** Readers who are interested in obtaining information about how they can get a quilt by Alice Olsen Williams can write to her at Curve Lake, Ontario K0L 1R0; telephone (705) 657-3319. Mrs. Williams charges \$40.00/square foot and invites discussion about what designs and colours one would like to have on the quilt.

## HEATHER KIRK

### Fish Poem

In the river here the brown sad waters  
run heavy with gain and loss  
swollen and ugly.

On the bank,  
the grub-men are selling fish  
alive in jars.

The drunk has a fish  
like a thick tongue  
and the murky water's sloshing.

the quick greedy  
little man  
has a quick greedy little fish.

I am a fish.  
Sometimes I float bloated and ugly  
on the tormented surface.

Today I dart like a crystal sliver  
through waters cold and clear  
of my own making.

For the one I love,  
my flesh will be white and cool  
and sweet.

I am a trout  
just caught in a distant mountain stream,  
disappearing as I am tasted.

### Wolf Berries

Wolf berries in an autumn bouquet  
where northern female oranges and  
lemons  
bleed scent and colour heavily, guiltily,

Dull eyes of the shy brown rabbit's  
child,  
shot, slit and slung  
limp-stretched in the yuletide pantry,

Rotted fairies of an ancient folklore  
forest  
gathered by outcast hags  
and dispensed with cackled prophesis—

Why were you waiting for me at the  
station  
where the stained-red iron trains  
go back and forth on iron pleasantries,

In the midst of a city where states of  
body,  
mind and soul and decorations  
are bought and sold as gay commodi-  
ties,

On an evening chosen from the shelf  
like any other, going or coming back  
again  
from some, or any other, activities?

If I should swallow you, pill  
by living-vooodoo precious pill, will I  
awaken  
in a better place, dark and sad and holy?

Or was the wolf-woman from whom I  
bought you  
to grace my heavy-laden table,  
only saving for the train-conductor's  
fee?