

Hepatica

By Esther Brucklacher

TODAY, I climbed a hill alone
And let my thoughts go sailing
To a tow path along the Potomac,
Where the river sings as it swirls
Around the rocks, and old boats
Rust in the sun on the crumbling banks
Of the dry canal.

In the spring we used to walk that path
And stop to rest and talk
Beside the grey, moss-cushioned boulders.
Once you found the first hepatica,
Blue-violet beside the thick green moss
And grey rock and blue-green river.
As you pushed aside the dead grass
Beside the fragile stem,
You found an old leaf
And held it a long time in your hands.
Finally you said, "Three-lobed hepatica!
Our life will be like that; you and I and God,
One unit, renewing life and growth
Each new season."

Today, I climbed a hill alone,
And was quiet, remembering.
Suddenly on the hillside ahead I saw—
One hepatica standing slenderly
Above the wind-combed grass!
Blue-violet color you had taught me to love!
Eagerly, I kneeled and pushed the grass aside,
Digging away some dead oak leaves,
An acorn cup, a rotting nut,
Seeking the three-lobed leaf.
There was only the flower.