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## Of Janet

David McGrath  
*College of DuPage*

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## OF JANET

*David McGrath*

Tell me not of shields and bones  
 'Neath Trojan sands,  
 A dream forever ago.

Nor of bodies bloodless —  
 Time-washed by Normandy's surf —  
 The black and white of ancient nightmares.

For the saddest soldier of them all  
 Lies part-buried adjacent my dock.  
 Its blue helmeted head and painted smile  
 Popping up from the sand, a child's reach away  
 From the yellow plastic pail.

And the broken toy shovel  
 That knew the once warm grasp  
 Of the busy tan fist  
 (Digging and planting  
 The carved wooden sentry),  
 Stares like the barbed bayonet  
 Ripped from my soul.

"Happy memories heal," advised the fool,  
 Who never heard the lullabies against which  
 I must shut my ears,  
 The ones she hummed to her summer's domain  
 Of tadpole trenches and coffee can castles,  
 As she squatted frog-like in the foam,  
 Her pink painted toes probing the wet sand.

Instead, let the dirges blow  
 Through the aspens to  
 Smooth over her footprints,  
 And let the lake lapping lift  
 This last soldier, and deliver him, too,  
 To the numbing depths.