

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Kate Knapp Johnson**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**  
2004

**Publisher:**  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Kate Knapp Johnson()

# Parker's Mountain

It is the summer bears ruled, the last summer  
of pure breathlessness  
when I moved unaware, taken in  
by the netted branches of raspberries, held  
in trance by the sweet air  
of the orchards. My grandfather  
died at home one night in early July  
as expected, and the white clouds drifted like snow  
on the face of the black lake.  
Grandmother swept her porch clean, every morning  
pushed grief under the railings like wisps  
of an old bird's nest. Together  
we watched the she-bear heave both bins  
of garbage across the red clay road, her cubs  
somersaulting each other, never minding  
their mother's cautioning strikes. It is the summer  
I was on the brink of seeing  
some unexperienced light, although I stood  
in darkness, or swam in spools  
of dark while everything was bright around;  
the gold lilies and their shadows flickered  
one on one and the two swans stayed  
faithful and fierce in their cove. I was twelve  
and though I knew language  
I did not know the meaning of things--  
I lived within a lattice of time, unhurt,  
undifferentiated, so that even in remembering now  
there is only the singular quality  
of that time itself; while I was there,  
in its duration, I was possessed, wind-mastered  
as the scrolled fields of clouds and disappointed  
when the spell was broken and the real snow  
came, and the cold.

Kate Knapp Johnson

# The Meadow

Half the day lost, staring  
at this window. I wanted to know  
just one true thing

about the soul, but I left thinking  
for thought, and now -  
two inches of snow have fallen

over the meadow. Where did I go,  
how long was I out looking  
for you?, who would never leave me,  
my witness, my here.

Kate Knapp Johnson