

Hand Colored-Tapestry

by Wendy Creekmore

I

Bushels of beans broke,
corn-shucked, blankets
and memories quilted by hers
she who snapped and said, *No*, and *Stop that!*
made gum-wrapper wine glasses
during fire and brimstone sermons hot
as my Navajo desert sun

the same sun
that creped the fair
skin of my Appalachian Mamaw's hands;
at 60 she tugged aged lobes and wished
for a young girl's earrings, at last breath-engorged knuckles, brown spots of time
and everything good and true that touched the mix of us.

II

A permanent trace
of mechanic's grease under pocket knife-trimmed nails, the stain
of a life's work at the end
of strong arms always working, working, giving
his children, not of his seed, hand
in hand, peach mocha olive.

Bypass veins carry mouthfuls
of Lucky Strike smoke
cupped inside to hide
Dad's *well-known* secret
as the not so mysterious
haze clears, the small
larger than life man polishes tools as relocated veins pump.

III

Exactly the same the last time
I saw them soft caramel
skin, nail-bitten reaching out
to me the first day he was my brother
a Mexican boy, adopted southerner
Dad's helper, expert hook baiter, caster and reeler
yielder of the perfect catch.

Crossing the street—
saying goodbye
blended with mine through it all
came back once more
small and gentle,
soothing
hands patting my back in a dream.