



The Sower

by Lesley Kerr

The final throes of a desperate man...
“My god I have done all I can!”
He howled at the moon,
through tears of frustration.

“A man’s job is to provide for his family
If you cannot do that, you flee!”
So, he left with no destination in mind
blindly going as far as the eye could see,
Knocking on doors, sleeping in sheds;
labouring at whatever work he could find.

At first, he was a victim, easy prey
for every vagabond and ne'er-do-well who came his way.
But as time went by, he stiffened his spine and narrowed his eyes
Became a master of deception, adept at telling lies.

He went from village to village working for a meal or some grain
His head bowed and expression blank to hide his pain.

He grew tired and weary tormented with thoughts
of the children he would never know.
Who would only hear of the father who left them,
he would never see them grow.

He thought of his steadfast wife Josie with gratitude and pride
Although relentless poverty had forced them apart
Childbirth and drudgery had soured his once beautiful bride
Her lips had thinned as her hips grew wide.

It was easier to forget his family in the bustling market towns
When he could drown out his thoughts with ale or mead
Shamefully bought with his meagre earnings
And hastily gulped down with greed
He took comfort in faceless women who kept him warm at night
Barely noticing as they crept away at the morning's first light.

More than five years passed
Before he returned to his home
Not a rich man but with more wealth than he had ever known.
But the path was unwelcoming
The hedges overgrown
No wife and kin ran out to meet him
Only the empty house mocked him in greeting.

Howling though no one could hear
he scattered precious seeds which had cost him dear
"My God I have done all I can
to prove I am not a worthless man!"