

"Water"

(from a 4-part poem entitled "Elements"

by Clyde Watson

the lilt of water  
wove like a bright thread  
through the days, calling us  
to the brook below  
or the swamp over the field,  
Sackett's Brook a mile away,  
and farthest from home,  
the swift-rolling Connecticut river,  
southern boundary of our property,  
on whose banks we stood and dreamed  
of crossing to the other side

water had polished smooth  
the brown stones of East Putney Brook,  
hollowed deep holes in glacial rock  
just right for sitting in,  
and carved a chute in the falls  
for us to hurtle down,  
riding the rush of wild water  
to be dumped shrieking  
into the pool at the bottom

the water we drank  
came from a spring up the road  
covered by mossy boards  
under the leaves,  
relic of a lost civilization—  
and whenever water  
stopped flowing to the house  
father went up to clean out the spring  
and I liked going with him

to carry his bucket and rope  
and watch him reach  
down into black water,  
scooping to haul up  
mud, blackened leaves,  
sometimes a dead mouse  
and always a chance  
of the golden ball  
dropped by a princess

on winter mornings  
we woke in rooms muffled quiet  
and strangely dimmed  
by swirls of white fern and feather  
etched on the insides of the  
windows—by blowing with hot, patient  
breath  
steady on one spot, you could melt  
a clear, round hole in the frost  
and peer out past glittering icicles  
to the glorious, beckoning world of snow  
ablaze with sun