

SONG OF A HARRIER

I must go out to the hills again,  
To run in the wind and the sun,  
Through trees, and grass, and sand, and mud,  
'Til I and my feet are one.

With the rhythm of pulse, and breath, and step,  
I'm in tune with what I pass,  
The trees, the sand, the birds, the deer,  
And the sun on my face, and the grass.

The sweat drips cooling on my brow,  
And the good, clean weariness grows,  
Washing the sorrow out of my soul,  
As the rain the dust from the rose.

And I am renewed to face again,  
The tedium that is school,  
With those who seek to pry out my thoughts,  
To judge me scholar or fool.

Then comes a day with a race to be run,  
And though I am one of a team,  
I feel all alone, unaware of the sun,  
And foes my running mates seem.

We leap from the line at the sound of the gun,  
Like a herd of agile steeds,  
Rapidly spreading apart on the course,  
According to each of our speeds.

And each is alone, though one of many,  
In a battle to win the test.  
The worst of the foes is not the fast man,  
But the inner self, crying for rest.

And the mind must will to the tortured lungs,  
To the aching legs and feet,  
"Faster, faster, go on, go on,"  
"You've got to win this meet!"

At last, the finish line looms ahead;  
No matter who's first in the test;  
The real foe within, I've conquered, I know,  
Because I have done my best.

Then I will go out to the hills again,  
To run in the wind and the sun,  
And restore my body and soul with joy,  
To win the next race I run.

by Daye Hull