
POETRY

PORTRAIT

Seagull on our window sill
Standing so still
On your coral webbed feet,
Are you waiting
For the artist to paint
A portrait
Of your noble white head
With its strong yellow beak?

Do your sharp eyes detect
The inferior object
On her water color paper
She is sketching –
A tethered dead boat
Kept tamely afloat
In the grave winter bed
Of the Inner Harbor?

You proudly stretch your wings
To prove they are living things;
You lift your ivory breast
To show its soft gray patterning;
You quiver your white tail
Assured you cannot fail
To substitute for the dead
A live bird no artist can resist.

By *Jean MacKenzie*, 1014 7th
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HANDLE WITH CARE

Handle with care this prairie of glass
after a freezing rain.

Sunflowers and grasses are
entombed in ice and appear
frozen in time
like mammoths in icebergs
preserved like insects in a drop of
honey.

Rosehip popsicles glazed like
candied apples
taste cool and wet like fresh autumn
rain
and feel round and smooth like tiny
crystal balls.

The skinny aspen branches all hang
heavy
like crystal chandeliers
Chinkling and tinkling in the prairie
wind
Crashing and smashing as they fall
to the ground
and under my heavy steps.

And when the sun shines bright onto
the glaring ice
the prairie is a prism of light and
color
like the sight of distant Christmas
lights
during an evening winter storm.

I have never experienced such a
magical place
a crystallized community
so very fragile, beautiful, and rare
except for when I was standing in
this very spot
before the freezing rain.

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