

**Martin Robertson**

## **Fairy Story**

Her blistered fingers stumbling at their task  
as time ran short  
yet she completed of her nettlework  
all but the second sleeve of the twelfth shirt,  
leaving her youngest brother one swan's wing  
—strong and beautiful  
but powerless and grotesque  
where a man's arm should spring.

Would he then,  
since he could never wholly be a man,  
happily have remained  
an air-and-water-wandering swan?  
Or did he gratefully recover  
mankindness with its gifts and pains,  
even proud perhaps to suffer  
the flaunting symbol of a difference?