

Janet Ruhe-Schoen

Barbara Jackson Remembers

My mother wasn't a talker.
She never told me anything.
Then I lived with my grandmother.
She'd already had a lot of children.
She was very old.
She didn't need any more children.
I didn't want to bother her
So I grew myself up.

There was a cousin living there, too.
She was my age but she was very different from me.
She wasn't a talker.
She just wanted to sit on the floor and play with her kittens.
I wanted to know everything.
I always had to be doing something.

So I got up on the fence.
I threw a rope around this horse's neck
and I got on his back.
I taught myself to ride and I rode everywhere.
The river used to flow in those days.
There were little pools.

I used to ride down to the water
and play in those pools.
My horse would wait for me.
He'd always wait for me,
and I'd ride him home.

Janet Ruhe-Schoen is originally from Pennsylvania, currently living in Arizona; have lived in many other places including Peru and Chile. Have worked as an ESL instructor, journalist, library clerk, vocalist, actor among other things. In Chile I was an investigative environmental reporter and I have a B.A. in environmental studies from State U. of NY; also reported for various newspapers and magazines in NY State. Have published several books of biography including *Rejoice in My Gladness: The Life of Tahirih*, the story of Iran's great 19th Century feminist icon. Published poetry and fiction in various zines.