

Betty O'Hearn

The Afghan Rug

Beaten down standing in the souk,
War widow, shabby rug to purchase,
Home filled with hungry bellies,
fatherless children.

Hand knotted with interlacing long threads,
by the Turks who crossed over borders.
Dark red colors, with bold octagonal pattern
reminiscent of Afghan's strong people.

We exchanged greetings in Pashtu
responses brief and sad.
Her face deeply wrinkled, downcast eyes,
tears trickled down her cheeks.

Her culture of haggling put aside,
I gave her full price for a rug not worth half.
A full moon tide filled her eyes,
her children will have rice.

Betty O'Hearn has been writing for over twenty years. She began to study poetry in 2009 with various published authors in North Carolina, "the writings state." She supports *Poetry Hickory* and assists in the *Art of Poetry* at the Hickory Museum of Art where ekphrastic readings are held quarterly. Her work has appeared in the *Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, *Wild Good Poetry*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, *Bloodshot Journal of Contemporary Culture* and online journal *Vox Poetica*. O'Hearn has helped adjudicate poetry for St. Stephens High School in Hickory for Poetry Out Loud, and prose writing for the Alexander Muse Teen Literary Magazine, Alexander Central High School, Alexander County, NC. Betty volunteers at the Hickory Museum of Art. She also serves as Conference Coordinator for InfoWarCon and FedCyber, two major forums whose focus is in the genre of cyber terrorism and national security issues.