

Barnegat Bay

by Derek Osborne

I whispered, "I love you"
and then, "Goodbye"
face buried deep in his warm winter coat.
Snow crunching hoof steps,
trusting, I led him
down to the pines where we'd whistled in winter.
"Breeding's a business,"
the trainer's voice echoed.
Earth mixed with snow,
the rifle cracked hard and
his young body fell onto knees that betrayed.
I shoveled my tears,
leapt out of boyhood,
"A man now," they said.
I dared not show them.

