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Rose Stone Tears
By Evelyn Bachmann

I found the barite rose in the Ozarks
Misplaced, lost.
A desert flower.
Made from sand and crystals in the red earth of Oklahoma.
The Cherokee rose.
Petrified tears, they say,
And a stranger to these hills.

Yet, there it was,
Pink barite petals lying on the top timber
of the zig-zag rail fence,
Draped with possum grape and last year's crop of poke.
It must have been placed there, a treasure,
Carefully by a chubby hand for safe-keeping,
And then forgotten.

I held it in my hand.
It was warm.
Warm as the tears of Cherokees along the old trail,
Uprooted by the inhumanity of man.
I felt a kinship to this stone flower
As hot tears runnelled my cheeks.
And the taste of sorrow
Was bitter on my tongue.

Two Plus
By Diane Holcomb

Count two little heads,
count your blessings,
count tomorrow,
count to three,
count on me.

Illustration by Sandy Wymer