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## Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle Received from a Friend called Felicity

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## Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle Received from a Friend called Felicity

During that summer  
When unicorns were still possible;  
When the purpose of knees  
Was to be skinned;  
When shiny horse chestnuts  
    (Hollowed out  
    Fitted with straws  
    Crammed with tobacco  
    Stolen from butts  
    In family ashtrays)  
Were puffed in green lizard silence  
While straddling thick branches  
Far above and away  
From the softening effects  
Of civilization;

During that summer—  
Which may never have been at all;  
But which has become more real  
Than the one that was—  
Watermelons ruled.

Thick pink imperial slices  
Melting frigidly on sun-parched tongues  
Dribbling from chins;  
Leaving the best part,  
The black bullet seeds,  
To be spit out in rapid fire  
Against the wall  
Against the wind  
Against each other;

And when the ammunition was spent,  
There was always another bite:  
It was a summer of limitless bites,  
Of hungers quickly felt  
And quickly forgotten  
With the next careless gorging.

The bites are fewer now.  
Each one is savored lingeringly,  
Swallowed reluctantly.

But in a jar put up by Felicity,  
The summer which maybe never was  
Has been captured and preserved.  
And when we unscrew the lid  
And slice off a piece  
And let it linger on our tongue:  
Unicorns become possible again.

—John Tobias