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MARLENE KADAR

Swaddling Clothes

In Memory of Elliott Kadar, 1953-2009

/Like a bird on a wire... I have tried in my way to be free/. Leonard Cohen.

My brother wore the barrel-maker's mantle, as if he thought that like those /kádárs/ before him, he could ply wood effortlessly into circles;

He swaddled those he loved with his out-of-the-blue certainties

and his boyhood predictions,

things he knew about medicine or ability when the evidence of science provided no solace.

Layers of life lived in the shroud of wrenched joints and swollen hands

he wrapped us in the love he had so carefully shielded from all that

as if trying in his way to be free.

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Note: "kádár," apart from being our father's name, is also the Hungarian word for cooper, or barrel and cask maker.