

## **Adult Winner**

**Sarah Leavesley**

### **Circles and Sandcastles**

My son draws a circle around us  
with a stick and starts to build.  
I help him dig, bucket after bucket  
of sand patted smooth.

He won't give up. We must decorate  
with shells, makeshift his stick  
and scrap paper into a flag,  
turn his scratched line in the sand

to a moat, then fill it with water.  
The silver circle around us glistens  
like his eyes, bright with sunshine,  
excitement...then tiredness.

The day is long and hot; my back aches  
from bending over, and his castle's no match  
for the nearing tide and careless feet.  
I'm glad when he falls asleep

and I can cradle him to the car  
before the first turret falls,  
and his trench of play-defence  
gives way to the encroaching waves.

As I walk, his body encircled by my arms,  
he casts another moat around us:  
invisible, but deep, sparkling  
and completely indestructible.