

KHAN-TENGRI

For T.D. Lee

A young man scaled the mountain Khan-Tengri;
The sun wove rainbows in the blowing snow.
Entranced, he stayed there as the colors changed
Until the stars became his only light.

Some say he talked with spirits in that night,
While others thought him crazed by lack of air.
Still, in the morning he strode from the fog,
The Tien-Shan spires rising at his back.

He taught to all his love of mountain heights --
The source of streams that flow from glacial walls
Past creatures crossing meadows crisp with frost
Down to the slopes where lofty cedars rise.

Faces turn skyward, children dream of peaks.
New climbers go in search of routes that mount
Through thinning air and wind that pierces bone
To reach the views no other eye has seen.

Larry and Alice McLerran