

and not for man, are credible in fiction only so long as they care about themselves first. The early modern stories, in which animals plead for human kindness or support romances of men raised by beasts, ventured on the new animal hero through special, nontypical applications of this care. From them Roberts developed the wider exploitation of animal heroes for general stories in which conflicts outside the repertoire of human fiction are centred on animals. No matter whether they were emphasizing science or adventure, Roberts and his followers depended for their artistic appeal on the universality of the earthly challenges facing man and animal alike. They ask their readers to feel at one with their heroes in contrast to the myriad enemies to both. They also expose the limits as well as the vastness of the expanded range of characters and topics for fiction. Art and life may be one, but stories of animals living only for themselves must still appeal to readers that are human.



## BEOWULF REMEMBERED

*Deborah Eibel*

In parishes along the northern bays,  
 Old men claim shells are maddened: regiments  
 Of shells lie breathless on the beach, and talk  
 At random of the wilderness of seas.

Their huge lips give a terror to the ear  
 Of timid noon. Yet speak they must: those shells  
 That make a silent kingdom of the sand  
 Are punished by the wind and thrown away.

But most endure; and each of these recites  
 Its private version of the history  
 Of champions who lived along the bays,  
 Of Beowulf, who played with maddened shells.