

# Military Funeral in a High Hills Cemetery

*Robert L. Jones*

An adulterous generation after all,  
We seek a sign, some old tune or rhyme  
Like Grandfather's Clock, even as we stand  
Among the tumbling chaos of death and birth  
That is mountains, woods, rivers  
And the wind's final word across a grassy knoll.

The impressive soldiers, tall and straight  
As poplars in their prime  
Make the young widow's grief bearable  
By tearing out her heart  
And shooting her with blanks.  
Tender and wise, they take the flag  
And fold it day by day, week by week, year  
By year until it is compact as a life  
And hand it to her,  
Its stitched colors retrieving  
Her life's unraveling threads.

Still in formation like the trees,  
The soldiers march away.  
The last man, in cadence, stoops  
To gather the shell casings  
And return them to her;  
Long, sharp nails now removed from her body  
Which I felt shudder like leaves  
Torn from the atoning year  
Flying past our eyes in bright wind  
On a high hill in early spring.