

gave it to twelve men he loved  
and they were filled.

The breaking and the eating:  
what a poor man does

with his own sorrows  
to understand his Lord.

## Some Kind of Beginning

The alfalfa fields had their own luster  
and, besides, no one came  
for any harvest. Instead, as children, we drifted  
in a golden sea with monarchs, my brother waving  
his net like a sail. We floated past  
clumps of aspen, tiny islands;  
other children, on swing sets and trampolines,  
were strange natives whose language  
we chose not to utter. Little pilgrims  
in our faded jeans and Keds  
we navigated past our abandoned tree house,  
past the chokecherries oozing  
their droplets of blood (the sticky splendor  
my mother caught and wrung  
into jelly, jam, syrup), past  
the knotted tree trunk crouched  
like a lost ogre trying to hide at the foot  
of the mountains, until we reached it:

the grave. And here we stopped,  
my brothers and me,  
to run, dance, laugh over the tombstone  
of an almost forgotten dog. *Rather*,  
meaning his name. Meaning  
I'd rather bury my bones in the dark. Or  
I'd rather lie here asleep. A tiny tombstone  
reading: "Rather, a dog who deserved  
far more than he got." Then,  
in the quiet of chewing  
our sandwiches, swallowing  
green punch, we sensed the spirit  
of the great dog rise up  
and beg. With a reverence  
befitting our Sunday School lessons,  
we listened, knowing of God  
and the afterlife, the inevitable judgment  
of all creatures. But even then  
at the mouth of the canyon  
the bulldozers started their engines.  
The alfalfa fields trembled.  
I think it was then, without our knowing it,  
that mortality came to us.  
Dirt over a rough grave. The whirl  
of approaching machinery.  
The anguish of swallowing it all for lunch  
with so much laughter to spare.