

Picnicking In Mt. Misery Cemetery

by George L. Chieffet

Picnicking In Mt. Misery Cemetery

We breathe the damp shade,
plum trees shining
in a woodland where there are few wrong things
I want to remember-- the steel fence
of the power company
blazing under an arc light is one.
On this day of ripening fruit
simpler to close my eyes,
invent springtime.
for you, at fourteen,
have cruel years before ripening,
before you know what I know is coming.
I spread a blanket and hide the corners under stone.
I watch for flutter
though you hold steady
as the stone marker bathed in laurel.
You are dainty as goldenrod, petite as buttercup
carrying flimsy shoes in one hand
taking careful backward steps
planting your toes just so
dancing over human bones
as serious as you will ever be.
Will you dig up the past?
Find roots in the world
that might give you grounding
while you are here?
You look past carved monuments and Virginia creepers,

complain about flies landing in our whipped-cream dessert.
Years from now, I will listen to the same voice
banish me from your life forever.
Even then, it will not seem the door is shut.
I will try, as I tried that day, to offer you salted nuts
some distraction, vamping for time.

