

Wilderness

We left the roadway and climbed up the trail
On past the basalt field, and it was rocky,
Behind us loomed a long extinct volcano,

Joshua trees ruled the landscape, the booklet said
They were so named by the Mormons because their bizarre
Limbs looked like arms flung in desperate prayer.

The dead tea-colored fronds covered their trunks clumsily
Like John the Baptist's haircloth. There was a yellow lizard,
The berries of the juniper were frosted blue,

There were no other people, no birds, and after the abandoned
Mine and a series of ridges with views over Lost Horse Valley
The trail was rougher, disappeared, you could feel the loneliness

Of the earth. The earth wasn't sure
If it wanted people to disturb its repose, it already had
Other living beings. Around us to the horizon it rolled

Its big rude stony beauty. We sat on stones and ate our sandwiches.
We were high, we hiked. The last four miles followed a streambed
Flat and sandy as a beach, shrubbery above our heads,

We were tribeless, it was only the two of us
On one of the stretches of our journey
That make us happy the way a child is happy

When its allowed to be naked, and the meeting
Of all that bare skin with air, blue air, a little breeze,
Makes it jump with joy on the family grass.