

Roland

I.

Holo Rusty

It was nice to hear from
you that you stile remerberd
Roland I wish you had said
all that to him before he went
I am not a speller so hope
you can make it all out.
Roland had asked me to put
his ashes in the gulie
acass the road but that land
has change hands & they told
us to stay out so I put them
ander the Grap Vine he plantd
the Grap Vine. Yes Rusty you
can com vist with him if you
lick. what was Rolands life
befor he did not good he was
daf he count stan up he had
to be lifed but the day he did
he said to me I am going
to get well & I am coming
home he said he found out
that his family met more to
him then all of Claforma
so Gail bourt all his
belongs home with him his
frind wont me to put him in som
park out thier but he wanted
to com home. his memorial
service was fine the Raven
did a grat job. to bad
you count be thier we had
a puitcer of him the box with
the ashes & one lille flower
hes frind from Midland bourt
for him. so every thank is
all OK I miss him

II.

Your mother's face at the open door —
your face: a raw plane
whitened with the salt of hope and sorrow.
The rose you planted back of the house
when you were 15, and the hibiscus.
Yard unmown, weedy, strewn
with failed cars and spare machine parts.
We walk like widows,
leaning left to one unseen.
Sitting beside the vine you set,
breaking a twig apart in long fingers;
your name ripening in the grapes above,
bugs at rest on rotting leaves,
a grocery receipt caught among the lily stems.

III.

Were you yawning in the kitchen,
reaching for milk,
when the blind germ woke
in your blood's hoop?
Dreaming of floods in the south of France,
or pulling burrs from a long-eared cat?
And when the moment of passing
passed,
and you came to,
resolved anew,
was this land's songspill —
all burnished murmur and shadows a'peace —
the wooing emanence you first knew?
Did you lie fresh-cut on a clean cloth
awaiting the vase,
or move like a hound abandoned to the city?

IV.

Your locus is now a genesis
where you thrive in cowed silence,
no longer friend — but ancestor.

Rusty C. Moe