

imagine

*imagine gray
wholly visible on a flat Kansas landscape*

*only a single stone
with names and dates*

*it looks so innocent
but I am afraid to read the words*

*imagine no stone
only the empty land*

*Louise Monfredo
1909-1987*

mother's birthplace

*da nat stand at the crassroads
weeping
ot the sight of my passing*

*nor lay a hand an the knob
and force open the daor*

*da not disturb my nodding
in this grass-soft chair
nor my prayers
in this tree-barred retreat*

*do not stride like an army
across my floor
and bring in your angry generation*

*do not betray the hiding places
of a wasp's nest
and tunnels
and the sparrow's song*

*nor secrets
stuffed beneath
eaves*

*leave them to your mother
and grandmother
at the last family supper
with a loaf of coffee bread
a half-glass of wine
laughter
and calloused hands*

Louise Manfredo