

Foot radius. Upright tufts of petals hid their stamens  
Till they dropped. Untame, but never wild.

I prodded languorous green mimics  
For a rusty plow, chimney bricks, foundation parts—  
Things that outlast ramblers—  
But under the leaf-locked shapes  
Only more plantlife and death, a pair  
Of ten point antlers and a piece of crumbling carnelian.  
My long stick struck another something hard. The vines  
Quivered, veins darkened. The rose defended  
Like a many-headed Medusa until, cursing,  
I hacked it with a hunting knife.

Thorn-crude carving on the stone read: Jebel Caleb Jones,  
Orphan & Bachelor, 1845—1864. This was his wish—  
To be buried where he fell.

I don't know why my eyes were wet and flaming  
Or why all roses flamed out and shed,  
Red blown shrapnel for an instant, then  
Soft panoply for the breached woven shield.  
Such quail cover! But I never went back to hunt  
There where the map makers quit.