

Graveside Solace

The boy likes to walk among the gravestones
scattered across the long smooth lawns
shaded by trees old and listening,
scented by flowers and newly-cut grass.
He lingers with the twelve family stones
graven with lilies, angels, and words.
The white babystone is his favorite -
a sculpted baby with one perfect rose.

His sister, his twin, his mother had said;
but the stone says three, not eleven.
Only three - while the rest are much older.
Alone, he asks them about their stone art
as he touches and traces lilies, and angels,
the words, the baby, the rose.
Sometimes he's certain he hears an answer
in the song of a bird or the whispering wind.

He feels they're all listening but sad;
for grief quiets the others who visit,
makes them stand there and silently cry.
So the boy jokes and sings and tells stories
to each of the listeners in turn.
Though he tells different stories each time,
he's not sure what to say to a baby like Rose,
so he whistles or sings nursery rhymes.