

THE GOOD LIFE

The early morning meditation
Picking wild cherries
In the orchard
In the upper reaches
Of the historic village of Placitas
Qualifies
As part of the good life
Of making wild cherry wine

Some years ago
Later in my dad's life
He and I were riding
At the ranch
Where I grew up
And
Where he lived the better part of his life
We rode thru the landscape
Looking
Listening
Talking
At the top of a ridge
He stopped his horse
And turned to me

You know
I never got rich
But I have always been surrounded
By wide open spaces

My brother calls it
The Church of the Original Creation
He attends the sermons
As both the pastor
And the audience of one
Often times
The sermons take place
At the Milton Puckett Ranch
Ten miles south of Fort Stockton
On Wednesday afternoons
After he closes his veterinarian clinic at noon
For the day
Sometimes
He holds a weekend retreat
With himself
Thirty miles southwest of Marfa
On the W. E. Love Ranch
Sometimes
He leans back in his recliner
On a Sunday morning
With a cup of coffee
To watch some game he recorded the night before

Late June
Early July
Finds me
Picking wild cherries