

2. The Death of Ananias

(Acts 5:1-10)

There must have been something with-
held as if
you know the story you'll
know has been said about me.

I saw what we all saw: goats and cattle,
grain,
one ancient and three newer family
houses and finally

the second-best vineyard for miles around
converted
into silver and simply
laid on the ground at their feet.

And namely the one called Peter: how
is it
that one among equals will seem
to have harnessed the moon

and stars. I understood the next
part, how the
logic went: we hadn't been
savages all our lives, we'd helped

the poor before. But this was something
else, was like
the dizzying vista above the gorge:
you think you've been quite

happy, your loved ones are waiting to
welcome you
home and you can taste the broken rocks
below through all your broken

teeth, you know the terror won't be
over until
you've thrown your one allotted life
away. And so

I stepped back, just a little, from the
edge.
What kind of reckoning after all requires
this all-or-nothing? Hadn't I

torn the lovely acres from my heart?
Which he
esteemed as so much filth. The least
that would keep the cold off, that's

all I'd intended to put aside. You
see?
And cold came up to seize me.