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Thirteen

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ALAN SOLDOSKY

THIRTEEN

Tell me why this hair grows out of my face,
my stupid face with its big nose
and volcanic skin breaking out in moon-size craters.
Who asked me if I wanted all this fuzz
above my lip where the skin is so shy
it blinks at the razor?

And what about the tangled vines under my arms
that mat with sweat. How I am supposed
to hide those from the smooth-faced girls?
And what should I do about the shaggy flower
that blooms around my balls,
or my secret risings and fallings?

It's difficult to conceive of myself as manly.
A man is the growl under the hood of a car,
or the snarling look of a semi
coming toward you on a two-lane road.
But I suppose, someday, I'll get barrel-chested
and bald, and eat my steaks well-done always.

I guess when I'm older my eyebrows will
bush together, like two explorers shaking hands
on an iceberg at the top of the world,
and hair will bristle out of my nostrils
and swarm from my ear lobes
like loose barbed-wire.