

ELIZABETH BREWSTER

## Lot's Daughters

They thought they were alone in the world,  
they and their father:  
their mother left behind,  
transformed by her tears  
to a tombstone of salt;  
their violent neighbours buried  
in the flaming ruins of Sodom,  
along with the young men  
who were to have been their husbands  
and the houses where they might have spent their lives.

The men, or angels, who had rescued them  
and led them out of the city  
had vanished into the ruined landscape  
leaving these two young girls  
with their ageing, timid father.

Climbing above the plains  
into the wild hill country,  
carrying their small supplies  
of bread and wine,  
they took shelter in a cave,  
huddling in its darkness  
away from their fiery memories;

hoped for some grains or berries  
not far from the cave,  
a spring of water,  
the milk of a wild goat,  
grapes to crush,  
a human future.

They remembered those old stories  
they had heard as children,  
how the world had once before  
been destroyed by water,  
thought that this time destruction  
had come by fire and ash.

But surely it was up to them  
once more to save the human race  
by making their grieving father drunk  
on the last of the wine  
planning a virtuous incest  
which would make them  
mothers of future generations.

Did the hovering guardian angels  
smile when they heard their plot,  
thinking survival, after all,  
the greatest proof of virtue?