

# INITIATION

by Michael Coffey, AZ MROP 2005

I see men walking wounded:  
hairy men, muscular men,  
fathers, lovers full of sex,

but dripping with blood,  
scarlet sons of pain  
cut by grief,  
drawn and quartered by failure,  
stabbed with jagged fear.

Some wise, bearded father,  
some elder with a masculine embrace  
has touched them with his own  
red-stained hand,  
blessed them with crucified words,  
sent them where they did not wish to go,  
smeared them with divine musky oil,  
named them beloved sons.

They have given up mountain climbing.  
They have come down from the great bluff.  
They have descended the shadowed canyon  
by a knotted rope.  
When they reach the end,  
dangling over mysterious, unknown ground,  
they let their grip slip  
and land on soft snow  
in the middle of summer.

These men are my brothers.  
I thought I had none.  
I thought I had suffered the  
male anguish alone.

But see:  
We are wounded together,  
broken in just the right places,  
a company of bleeders,  
each of us marked for death,  
and we are still walking.