

TIMOTHY MURPHY

Cross-lashed

A chapel, not a church:
just a clearing in the wood
of aspen, pine and birch,
where a rude altar stood

pegged by a boy's hands;
behind it a birchwood cross
cross-lashed, but neither stands.
They're gone under the moss.

When I quit Wilderness Camp
I rose up from my knees
and left the altar lamp
burning in the trees.

Summits would loom above
the stony trails I trod.
Sex led me to love;
love bound me to God.