Red, Orange, Yellow

Donald Hall
RED, ORANGE, YELLOW

For five years of my life, or ten.
I lived no-color.
In a beige room I talked
chipped whispers
with a lady who faded while I looked at her.
Even our voices were oyster-white.
My generous monsters
were pale as puff-balls of dust.
Leaves on trees I grew
turned dingy. I mowed pale grass.
Friends parked station-wagons like huge dead mice
by my house that was nearly invisible.
Dollar bills lost color
when I kept them in my wallet.
I dreamed of mountains gray like oceans
with no house-lights on them,
only coffins that walked and talked
and buried each other continually
in beige rock in beige sand.

So I looked for the color yellow.
I drank yellow for breakfast,
orange at lunch, gold for dinner.
Red was the color of pain.
Now I eat red
all day. The sky is her yellow.
Sometimes no-color years
rise in slow motion,
like Mozart on drums. Their name is Chumble.
They smile
like pale grass, looking downward.
But red sticks
needles in my eyes.
Yellow
dozes on the beach at Big Sur
or in the center of my new room
like a cactus
that lives without water, for a year.