

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/3

John Calvin Hughes
Minimal Man, to Himself

You have had to learn the simplest things last.
Even at fathering, slow to snag the stumbling
toddler, you diaper fumbling graybeard,
shodding left foot for right, flinched against

the unkindest cut.
So much undone, the heart
a rag on a bush, and no more.

You listened, learned, you
loved but didn't understand
love.

Who told you it was less
than a feeling, you minimal man,
not the sharp offering of a knife, but

an office, love, a responsibility
that finally only you accept.
No matter what she feels.

Feeling is nothing but a relation,
the empty space between elements,

yes, you know that,
for you have pleased no one,
not her, certainly not you. Love,
the office you have failed.

Again.