

## **Over the Edge**

by Wendell Berry

To tell a girl you loved her—my God!—  
that was a leap off a cliff, requiring little  
sense, sweet as it was. And I have loved

many girls, women too, who by various fancies  
of my mind have seemed loveable. But only  
with you have I actually tried it: the long labor,  
the selfishness, the self-denial, the children  
and grandchildren, the garden rows planted  
and gathered, the births and deaths of many years.

We boys, when we were young and romantic  
and ignorant, new to the mystery and the power,  
would wonder late into the night on the cliff's edge:

Was this love real? Was it true? And how  
would you know? Well, it was time would tell,  
if you were patient and could spare the time,

a long time, a lot of trouble, a lot of joy.

This one begins to look—would you say?—real?