

## secret children

a desert  
a wasteland  
cold.

something terrible  
thousands and thousands of crude wooden crosses  
    the skeleton of a child nailed to each and every one  
close your eyes and imagine this  
imagine your own child in this place  
imagine yourself.

winter winds whip the bones of these children  
rib cages frozen in fear decades ago rattle but  
    keep their secrets still.

between the bones  
    there is ice  
inside the ice  
    there is fire  
within the fire  
    there is a secret  
the secret that keeps them here.

each child was brought here by an adult  
    a trusted friend  
brought here  
    exploited  
    split open  
    left here  
left to hang in this bitter wind and commune with ghosts.

the child never had a choice.

these children have families that love them dearly  
    blind families that will see no evil  
    deaf families that will hear no evil  
    dumb families that will speak no evil.

families that cannot believe  
    a child's body knows the difference between  
    fantasy and reality  
    ... *are you sure you're not making this up?*

families that cannot believe  
    their beautiful children could have been  
    taken away  
    ... *but you were such a happy child!*

families that cannot believe  
this could ever happen to  
their own children  
*... not in this family!*

families that cannot believe  
the words *sexually abused* could ever describe  
their own children  
*... no secrets in this family, by god!*

it is not too late for these children  
they await resurrection and salvation  
they ache to be healed  
but cannot do it alone  
fathers mothers brothers and sisters  
lovers spouses families and friends  
they need you.

take them down from these crosses  
*trust them*  
welcome them into your heart  
*love them*  
hold them close and warm their coldest places  
*hear them*  
feel their fire and honor it  
*believe them.*

one secret at a time  
one child at a time  
believe them.