

## *Albert Goldbarth*

### APOLOGY

I don't know what connects the different poetries  
of Jane Kenyon and Larry Levis, unless  
it's love of life so rich it can afford  
to love the weeping at its center. And,

of course, that both of them are dead now,  
early. How we *want* to read their work  
for strength that's independent  
of the happenstance

of elegiac context . . . which is what  
I try to have my students see  
in Plath and Keats, although I lie:  
we *can't* read purely, to the point

where we will separate the great, exclamatory  
words of Shelley from the sea-reek  
of his body in the rocks upon the shore. Nor  
will we ever read Anne Sexton anymore

without the tailpipe. I write this in apology  
to Jane and Larry, poets who  
deserve a reading better than we bring.  
And William Matthews too.