

Gail Kadison Golden

the monument

my children climb on song of
the open road as walt whitman, hat in hand,
gazes with eyes of chiseled bronze, away
from
the entrance to bear mountain zoo, into the
tops of spare october trees.

the poem, carved into rock, delights
small fingers
which trace each letter; brush away leaves,
dirt, twigs.
I am told to read aloud from a poster
near the statue's base which duplicates the
words
in a less demanding form.

they check each word with care, hoping to
catch the
stonecutter in some error not detected
till now. he was precise to each period.

leaves blow across the poet's stony coat,
land
by his motionless boots. I envy him, that
his poem has become a rock.

my children climb on 'song of the open road,'
lie across the sunwarmed sentences, feel the
granite print. I rest with the sharpness of
the poem on my back and the sun on my face.