**North of Eagle Nest, South of Raton**

Larry Schug

Driving north on New Mexico 64,

Spring appeared in the foothills

in the guise of a girl,

yellow hair flying like her horse’s mane,

riding a palomino pony,

galloping across the high plains

in the kind of reverie that can only be

inspired by the fickle end of winter.

The day, mostly gray,

threatened snow higher in the hills

as she rode between the dregs of snowdrifts,

rivulets of meltwater like tangles of thread,

changing from silver to gold and back again,

clouds cantering through the range of sky,

searching for a blue pasture to graze,

painting the earth below

from a palette of shifting shadow and light.

I know no reason why the image

of the yellow-haired rider and horse

sunlit for a second, shadowed the next,

still rides twenty years later

in the memory of an old man,

though he welcomes the vision

as a reminder that this day is also fat

with the possibility of beauty

between the blinks of a searching eye.