



Bethany

*John 12:1-8 Mary Magdalene in Stained Glass,
The Church of Rennes-le-Chateau.*

I was wiping his feet with my hair
when I heard Judas snicker
over the salve. The spikenard, its pungent

scent, its expense. Christ waved him
away, scolded his calculation,
that paltry sum. What jewel, what gem

or silver could steady the scale?
I let my fingers travel and they cried out,
racing circles in small figure eights

on top of each foot . . . Oh,
the moons of the toes, those
pale nails – his worn skin like crepe-

everlasting. I wanted his body
intact though he's shared the intricacies
of the pact with me alone. My hair

hid my tears, the way smoked clouds
hide rain. We are circumscribed
on this earthen stone. Noosed in our own

Uroborus--What we knew was incomplete.
What is destiny next to the body's love?
The hair on my neck

stood up at the thought
of the olive grove, the centurion's
severed ear. And how does one face

the climax of what one desired
so much--oh the wash, the rubbing
unguent. Just touch—

just touch,
such as it is
on this serpentine rock.