Sacred Love

Manuel Cisneros built a crèche of rocks
close to the lip of the sea.

Hundreds walked down to see
    Mary, Joseph, and the three wise men,
the small stone Jesus
    on his rock cradle.

Around them all, Manuel built
    a low mission wall,
no mortar or glue, just rocks
    coaxed and gentled together.

He called his sculpture Sacred Love,
speaking of the story he told,

    and love is what I call
    the work of his hands,
like that of the Tibetan monks
    who spend long weeks
    sifting colored sand,

    and when their mandala is done,
    the monks sweep it away.
Just as Manuel heads home
    at the end of day,

leaving the holy family alone
    to face the winds
    and the hungry sea.

Kathryn Ridall