

Who's who

by [Paul Willis](#) in the [October 31, 2006](#) issue

*But Martha was distracted with much serving (Luke 10:40)*

And why do we assume that Martha is the elder of the two?

Maybe she is the younger one, always stuck  
with Mary's chores while Mary practices meditation,

her yoga, her imaging, maybe arranges  
crystals on the living-room floor.

Martha has been abandoned

in the kitchen for years, lifting the stone pitchers  
of water from off the porch with both hands  
day after day, her young back giving way

under the strain, pouring out her youth to provide  
her older sister and this latest rabbi of hers  
another of her good portions.