

Bear Lake

A fog follows the levee
Along the drain canal.
The lake is drawn from the valley
Leaving sand and shell.

Ice is hiding the river,
Snow covers the sand,
Thick-lipped winter bends
The willow wands till they totter.

Winter weakens to spring,
The fog scatters out to the benches,
Unbending willow prongs
Lean up from the snow by the fences.

The wind blows away the sound
Of straining pumps at Lifton,
Within me I hear them in vision
Turning the lake into sand.

Mountains rise out of the water
The bottomlands sag into swales,
Sloughs are festered with frogweed,
In the mud lie leeches and shells.

Bear Lake lies in the sand
From the pumps to the Wasatch wall.
In its evening levels swell
Black shadows of the land.

Planting the upland fields,
I heard a far sound of flails,
And the wind washed by in a wave
Like the sway of swinging wheat.

Now the thin fringe of leaves
Has darkened and heavied to brooding.
Wind from the mountains crowding
Scatters the petals and seeds.

Water is gone from the marshes,
Pumps in silence are lying,
Grain in the valley flourishes:
All but the land will be dying.

—Edward L. Hart