

Hope House

After the land, the basement
comes first. All you need
is muscle and cement,

a little plumbing, framing,
wiring—kitchen, bath, and at most
two bedrooms—you keep it
cheap and simple because
probably it's the depression
and you don't have a dime.

(It ain't a hope house
anyway unless you live low down
and hope for something better.)

Then the roof goes on—flat
and a foot or so off the ground,
with tiny windows. Some folks like
a peaked roof, but it ends up
looking like a regular house drowned
in dirt—so don't put on
any airs, just pour some steps
and throw up an entry,
like a lean-to standing there.

Utah used to be full of hope
houses—places where you could live
indefinitely if things didn't work out.

—R. A. Christmas