

## Lombardy Poplars

They lined both sides of streets  
In older Utah towns  
And bordered close-in fields—  
Planted no further apart than fence posts—  
As alien in the West as settlers were.

Their thick-ribbed trunks and heart-shaped leaves  
Marked them kin to native cottonwoods,  
But with that peculiar spire-like form  
That spaced so close, quickly  
Made a hedge fifty feet tall.

It was always said that they  
Were planted as windbreaks.  
And true, the sweep of wind  
Through empty valleys  
Could do with some impediment.

But was it that the Eastern men  
Emerging from their forest groves  
That ever blocked the distant view  
Found the scale just too immense  
And needed walls against the space.

—John S. Harris