

## Still-Life Study of an Ancestor

Warren Walling (seed of fishers of the sea  
who warred to birth a nation of vast vision)  
studied thrift, hard labor, common sense,  
belief in God and good; grasped the Word

and with his outcast wife and six offspring  
plodded to Iowa in time to see the Saints  
escape; settled, nevertheless, printed, thrived,  
sired two more children (who lived past birth),

and on a prudent day incautiously looked West;  
Captain of saints, he urged legendary oxen  
from privation into Zion's turmoil, confronting  
disease, purges, Johnson's Army, Anti-Bigamy

laws, Brother Brigham's counsels; battled  
soft-haired Emma's joining with a married man  
her father's age, wept for granddaughters  
dying one by one, born to that union;

gathered all but Emma and her sister, Rachel,  
abandoned eight years' land and cattle, dreams;  
and not foreseeing through despair a century  
when scores of his seed blossom in the Rose

valiantly singing old hymns of belief  
in things he knew, un-flicked by his scourge,  
he died in Iowa and laid his shattered dust  
beneath the stone of reasoned sacrifice.