

Water Will

Lewis Horne

1

In that first summer before a town was
(Only tents and wagonbeds), they tossed
Pails of water over the sun-scorched canvas.

Inside, in this desert spot, a breeze,
Should one happen there, might help contain
The heat with a bit of coolness smoothed across.

But where, I wonder, in that desert land
Was water come by? The nearly bone-dry river?
It seemed the bedrock oven of the world.

2

My grandfather from Bear Lake, Idaho,
Still shivering with the memory of bears
And ice, with the era's version of a back hoe,

Teen-aged, joined the crews to dig canals
And ditches, following the primitive marks
Of the Ho-ho-kam, almost invisible.

Like these mythic folk, these men later
Spread across a tableland asweat
With farms, a trickle, flow, then stream of water.

3

Our farm where we moved four miles from town
(To Lehi, where those pioneers first came)
Had lemon, orange, and grapefruit trees full grown,
A pasture down below and about the house
A lawn. When the time to irrigate came round—
A night-and-daytime shoveling-chore it was—

We flooded with water. Water everywhere.
With uncanny clarity, the clouds and sky
Looked up from the flowing lawn through brilliant air.

4

For the house, we had a pump and covered well.
From what fields below the earth we drew
The water, gushing from the tap in a full

Pure spring, I have no map or measure.
Only a source for gratitude for
What comes out of a darkness I can't feature.

Perhaps we're on the edge of some great ripple
That, come so far from the bounty of its center,
Still bears the force and blessing of that will.