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Clinton F. Larson

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Columbia River

Clinton F. Larson

The sunstream river wends below Cascade Locks
 Between green mounds of shoreline whose sable
 Pines rectify slope, verge, promontory, and rock,
 Upward pencilling the windwaving sills of blue.
 Ages of sunmist sheet and fall, resonant in palms
 Of morning where gleam green and yellow as rue
 Of night. Flashing, spiring, windbreaking over
 The vibrancy of waves, the weather moves in calms
 Of light, surf of it beyond, reviving. The cup
 Of harbor, inlet, farms arising, wheat of land
 Will mark randomly where farmers found arable
 Soil between golden mounds of desert Oregon.
 Run of wind riffling the river mounts windrows
 On the far shore as a skiff turns, yielding
 And tipping in a bend to find the shadowy wharf
 That teems with sail and gear: tenor of days
 In the sweep will pay the fare for green turn
 And bend on that river, greening to Portland,
 Beyond which the water spreads and calms in
 Pacific blue. O angelus of capped rounds
 Of sound and bays of the coastal rock, I lock
 The skiffs of cirri in and keep them wavering
 Sunward on the stream!

Clinton F. Larson is professor of English and poet-in-residence at Brigham Young University.