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The Irrigation Turn

Sally T. Taylor

Placing his sinking steps
Along the ditchbank's
Straight-ridged and muddy path,
He paced the racing water
Flowing to his field.

Shovel-staffed, he followed
Force and flow with miser's
Eyes and gauged the stream
Against past time-tithed turns
To weigh his water rights.

He scooped the weeds and mud
With dripping strokes to free
From damming stands the moving
Water, the pale blood's field
Flow, his crop's communion.

Then down each row, the flow
Like silver veins dispersed.
The man, at field's end paused
And bowing to the labor,
Removed the second-field gate.

Sally T. Taylor is an assistant professor in the English Department, Brigham Young University. "The Irrigation Turn" was the 1979 First Place poem in the Ann W. Hafen category of the Utah State Poetry Society Contest.