Looking at a Utah Road Map

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Looking at a Utah Road Map

It is pinched now, like any epic brought to line and page. Pressed like flowers in a book is the land. The stingy pines, the dry mountains, the creeks, the desperate sage. Are marks and scratches in a map with interstates and highway signs. One-quarter inch equals each mile of blessed Zion wide—Of love and hate between sons and brothers; of hope and dread; Of charity and sin, trusting time’s vast capacity to hide. In ink and ledgers; waiting there for the anxious pilgrim to read. The secret signs and markings—the promises of a promised land: Vernal, Fairview, Pleasant Grove. Richfield, Fruitland, Bountiful; Eden, Garland, Sunnyside. And hear hidden music to soothe hurt hope. Tooele, Payson, Kamas; Manti, Parowan. There, too, the tales of will and power told by men Who chose to mark the map: Heber, Murray, Hyrum, Hinckley. Woodruff and Brigham City. But somewhere near the edge of myths, reminders Small of second sons and lost prayers still linger: Sandy, Thistle and Hurricane. Sulphurdale, Salina, Faust and Thermo. Muddy Creek and Dirty Devil.

—Thomas Asplund

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