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Seed

Philip White

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Seed

I was born in the desert
Brigham made bloom.
I was reared among the dry grass.
Measured water
came each two weeks,
and even God
could not make it reach
to the far fence corners.
The dirt there was white,
hard as chalk. Every few feet
were the niggard weedflowers,
blooms so tight
you had to stoop
to see their hard yellowing.

His cottonwoods
are now a hundred feet high,
trunks five feet thick,
bark greyer and deader
than barn shakes.
I am an old man pouring water
into dirt cracks, praying
against the disadvantage
of seed.

—Philip White