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The Uintahs

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The Uintahs

The Uintah Mountains master the man, pinching
 His inch-high image to a freckle on the rock he climbs.
 Sometimes pride leads him to believe he conquers them
 When he reaches peaks and leaves his name in bottles on the tops.
 He descends and sees through the teasing haze of his distance-
 Blurring vision, how oblivious above him the mountain Hayden
 Stays.

These people think they know. Some hurried
 Tourists who have seen Boulder Dam and the Grand
 Canyon talk in the lodge of scenery.

The oppression

Of the pressing weight: upheaved Hayden's crowding
 Of the ground downward, the lower ridges' deceiving,
 Lead young couples to achieve the steepness and surmount
 The mountains' mass and match the fixedness with feet.
 Eager to be mystic as the summit mists and lifted,
 Optimistically lightened by youth's delusion, they let height
 And time die and climb far farther than they need,
 To see what is not to be taken. Hard
 Hills hide their precious spots so only the knowing
 Find them. Columbine and wild fern—
 Dove-flower and unwinding frond—sprout and seed
 In a spot, guarded in the rock like a spark spared.
 Lower the climbers come, closer to the ground,
 Their sounded blood pumped passionless. They are pale, and pain
 Means nothing. The mountain height has taught by taking all.

—Edward L. Hart