Looking at a Utah Road Map

Thomas Asplund
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

Thomas Asplund is a member of the faculty of law, Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada.