

# 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