

## AND HIGHWAYS POOL

And highways pool  
on their way from coast to coast in places  
they swell, obstructed  
by dams set up long ago  
on the frontier  
before rail and tie gave way  
to concrete and asphalt;  
they dig deep into the soil  
with use

And some so deep and so nearly lakes  
the movement almost stops altogether--  
places called Chicago, Kansas City  
Omaha, Denver  
interior coasts really,  
centers for culture and commerce  
so congested they snag  
what should have passed on through  
leaving it to stink and buzz  
in the broad prairie sun

And in some places  
I-80 only spreads into shallows eddying  
into burnt-brick lanes where merchants  
set up shop  
for the coming flow  
but were diverted from the building of dams  
from the making of money  
by the growing of a community places  
with soil enough for corn  
and children.

And as the trucks part the grain of a continent  
without more than a passing glance  
en route from coast to coast  
to coast  
listeners within old houses hear the  
midnight whine of  
diesel-on-rubber-on-pavement  
hear the dark murmur of  
fellow voices  
who lay down in the  
wild interior  
just near enough the shoals

to drink safely.