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Thinking Montana

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THINKING MONTANA

Some days I celebrate space
the raw clash
of homesteader's shacks with my Buick
I sense
the madness that must have grown
all long winter long
and still grows in bars we call home
what does that cow know about me
the friendly people
victims of harsh demeaning days
with no reason
and too much need to be friends
sad Indians
with license to spit
when I drive through Browning
the thick despair
how in that spatial monotone
of plains
and power lines
bad things we ought to forget
compound themselves into storms
how one friend
turns snow gold
and how the names of rivers
grow inside us wild
as runoff in May
I feel like a child there
like America's back
in the '30's
the leisurely barbers
the aimless meaningless
all too vital chat
of clerks in stores
the unstated ideas
we used to accept

that every life's important
every death
even our boredom
that money will always be hard to get
and poverty's no crime
that we help each other
stay true to our lives
even the spring seems old
some former spring
the firm odor ground gives off
when it hardens
the high rivers defined in our blood
and it breaks wide in the mind
Montana
breaks like a lover's sky
warm blue and forever
I've died there often
my car
kisses the wide day ahead