

LIKE LAND USED UP

Like a plain still holding meadow curves, but brown
and seen from one personal place in the broad palm of it
I am, with all blades stooped in a uniform lean
like stalks crushed or blight bent wheat.
The heart went out of it all at once, all over.
And still, the still picture of it is *waiting*.
Waiting like a long dead tree still waits,
sign to a whole life spent learning to stand
in one place, so deep, it is hard to forget.

I once saw an apple orchard die without a sign,
in middle season, two years of bounty harvest after
one sharp freeze froze earth past deepest roots,
killing all from the bottom up, but not before
two years' grace wore threat out in double seed
in earth that was always ready to wed.

No, not like land used up is my present plain,
more like dues for shallow root putting
in an irrigate, easy life—and as I say it, yes,
I am not in one place, yes, out there past target-zero
there is a small green that is mine, I can tell,
like newborn fingers starting to move before eyes open—
such, such a blue child I must have seemed,
but watched, watched, the fingers begin to move,
all over, beyond the palm, like secrets beginning to tell.