

*A Bedroom Community*

We were all bedded down  
in our nightcaps, curtains drawn

as swamp coolers and sprinklers  
hissed every brown summer hour, or in winter

sagebrush hardened in the cold. It was still dark  
as our fathers rose, dressed, and boarded

blue buses that pulled away, and men  
in milk trucks came collecting bottled urine

from our doorsteps. Beyond the shelter belt  
of Russian olive trees, cargo trains shuffled past

at 8:00 and 8:00, and the wide  
Columbia rolled by, silent with walleye

and steelhead. We pulled up our covers  
while our overburdened fathers

dragged home to fix a drink,  
and some of them grew sick—

Carolyn, your father's marrow  
testified. Whistles from the train,

the buses came, our fathers left.  
Oh, Carolyn—while the rest of us slept.