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## California Water

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Children, grandchildren, their joy, their fears—  
In the house on the hill, where the sun

Above the Florida fills a breakfast nook,  
Arcs over the land of the Utes, sets to the West  
Of the La Platas—hill-on-hill to reach such  
A sky as river blessings drop such

A great and holy love from—Sam and Jacqueline.

(For Sam and Jacqueline Maynes)

### CALIFORNIA WATER

California water starts in the heart  
Of the Sierra and the Rockies, in  
Oregon north of the Lassen country,  
Up in the mother lode of snow.  
So many rivers, so much beauty,  
Land of the Golden Trout and  
The Monterey Bay fandango,  
A place where many peoples sail

To where the rails begin to intercept  
A nation made of so many nations,  
Its water law reflects a polyglot  
Of doctrine—continuous flow and the  
Mining camp, of pump whenever you  
Can and leave it alone to shape  
The fish and the land—where Delta  
and Omega tap the Range of Light

And nobodies out of Oklahoma and  
China lent their muscle and were  
Spat at. It's a wonder the way golden  
Poppies and the sea otter dance  
Upon the hills, in the waving kelp forest,  
And the remnant Giant Sequoia still  
Hope their chance to keep on standing  
Depends, really depends, doesn't it?

## FARMING FOR BIRDS

The improbable Sally Shanks of Staten Island—  
Far from the Eastern Shore, this is the California Bay Delta  
Staten Island—farms for birds, cows, and humans,  
Corn, wheat, and tomatoes.

Ibis, trumpeters, sand hill cranes delight in Sally's place,  
Taking off and crying out, they tuck their prehistoric toes  
Behind a set of sleek and lovely wings, hooting  
Sally's contemporary into the next field.

Improbable, the means and pattern of irrigation, too.  
Levees make the island whole and possible, Sally lets  
The water in for standing birds to feed, pumps  
The water out to grow the crops.

Just over there, the Sacramento ship channel, down  
The line a massive set of pumps to take the water south  
To other farms, many people. Salmon get confused  
About which the Sacramento, where the

San Joaquin? the place isn't what it used to be  
For anyone or anything—California, I mean—so improbable  
To a purpose, Sally and her crew of worker-birds  
Muck and call for Re-Beginnings.