Ice and Snow and Iowa

Sam Sample*

*Iowa State University

Copyright ©1960 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
Ice and Snow and Iowa

A faint blur along the road, feather-soft
in the distance. A wild sweep from ditch
to ditches sends the snow upswept like running quail
before the car lights, shifting quickly in
direction like an errant darting dog.
The mists blend in continuous strands that
spread a woven quilt swishing on the road,
left rattling beside the car, now behind
in darkness, clutching with silken forearms
at the flatness of the road,
sifting from weedy edge to weedy edge
like water across a concrete ford
that streaks the surface between jagged rigid
upturned rocks, lined beside the slab.
The clasp of white, bright in the shine of sun
clutches the Iowa countryside and
spreads in quiet, to houses set inward
among the dark green spruce and pine
that flank in stolid silence frame shacks and
barns, red, white or gray, lined once again by
skyward sprawling silhouettes black against
the sky. Tree shapes topped by fingers spreading
lace-like upward, once lifting fallen leaves,
now appearing upward bent to grasp the
white that puffs across the blueness of the
upturned bowl above.
White on an Iowa gripped in icy stillness
waiting for the first breath and freedom of
a spring, seeking beneath the clods of dirt
for flowers, and more.
Black-brown the fields lie, turned and flat,  
now holding spats of white and glistening thaw,  
frozen lakes of melting seeping water.  
Thin ice-shorn puddles gleam crystalline and white,  
in sparkling bridges laced across a gap  
left by water quitting an icy prison  
to search down gutters, gulleys, storm sewers  
and swollen streams toward a river  
seeking a lower sea.

Sam Sample, Arch. 5

Naked and Alone  
We Came Into Exile

Spewn forth with blood  
We entered this world,  
And lest we grow horns without delay  
We leave the same way.

Our inheritance is the original sin —  
The old mistakes we cannot make again;  
We have the third eye to tell us we cannot go back  
Nor even forward on the same track.

We are the quiet generation,  
Reserving our breath for the eons  
When someone will hear what we have to say  
(Or maybe just saving our breath to breathe free air some-  
day).  

"Naked and alone we came into exile"  
And though we are silent, all the while  
We know we are victims of the gene Destruction,  
And all of us, the side-products of passion.

James Wickliff, Sc. & H. Grad.