

# Rabbit Ears Pass

Two miles high  
All is in brightness:  
Snowfields, blinding white  
Stretch before us,  
Reaching upward in the distance  
Toward a thin blue horizon.

Ponderosa and aspen,  
Rimming the high mountain meadows  
Shimmer in the bright light,  
Grays and greens  
Washed out  
At high noon.

Purity, clarity abound;  
And utter quiet,  
Save the low rush of the wind,  
Skittering through the  
Sentinel trees  
That break its sweep  
Over the high divide.

A primeval quality  
Hangs in the air.  
We two figures  
Stand, and look on  
At a world apart.

Far beneath the snow cover,  
Columbine, paintbrush,  
Yampa and meadowgrass  
Wait for June.  
A slight slump here,  
And a line there,  
Describe rivulets  
That spring will set free  
Weeks away.

I breathe deeply  
Savoring the cold mountain air,  
Drawing it through my teeth,  
Then releasing it  
Slowly, finely.  
It has a taste,  
An edge.

We push off  
Across the whiteness,  
Gliding on the brief flats,  
Then zig-zagging up  
A broad slope  
Growing large  
In the work,  
The sheer determined effort  
Of movement at high altitude;  
Yet, too, I feel myself  
becoming smaller  
Against the vast, white meadow.

Topping out on the ridge  
I see the endless ridges  
Before me, to the north and east,  
And a long still course behind.  
Serenity, tranquility, purity  
Are here  
In the high country.

Then, the turn:  
Double-pole-push,  
Down, down;  
Skis slip through unbroken snow,  
With a whisper sound  
That mingles with the wind.  
Double-speed fast and slow-motion,  
Both, all at once,  
Gliding  
Down,  
Down,  
On and on and on.

Open, aware, and full,  
I see, and hear,  
Taste, feel, and smell  
Meadow and mountain,  
Sun and snow and wind.  
I am here and  
I see myself from afar,  
Gliding in the whiteness  
Clear and bright.

—DOUG DUNLAP