

# PASSING

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the mountain breathes its seasons—  
clouds hung with virga push into the desert  
streaks of rain that never reach the ground

when you hike the Mosca pass  
the rock's barren walls shade the path  
snow smothers the higher ranges

below in the dune field  
rabbitbrush grows in pale-yellow sheets  
meltwater seeps through fine sand  
then dries in the white-cruled flats  
of saltbush and saltgrass

the mountain broods over long and heavy times—  
bison and mammoth graze the valley floor  
night-fires flare up  
women with antler-tools knap spearheads  
and it rains for days

ring of hoofs—Spanish soldiers—  
they walk the horses  
on the narrow boulder-strewn trail

a tollroad awaits settlers  
who push on from Front Range towns  
with their pack trains and wagons

storms pass through--  
the stream's ditches give out  
a thunder-wave washes the road away  
rocks and trees batter the trail  
the tollhouse decays

elk and bear return  
flowers keep close to the path  
flies unravel the air-sound

the pass is humming in time  
--*mosca* means fly--  
stand still and they will gather