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Sailors en Route to San Pedro

Jessamyn West

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SAILORS EN ROUTE TO SAN PEDRO

The land-locked boys are moving
to sea in dusty trains:
the boys who know no more of water
than falls in prairie rains.

The ears attuned to rustle
of wind in summer corn
will hear on distant waters
sounds more forlorn.

The mouths that whistled, kissed
shape now for darker tasks
and peach-downed faces harden
to look like sailors' masks.

O may their dry bones never
suffer sea change.
May all that's coral and watery weeds
Exceed their furthest range.

JESSAMYN WEST

TO EDMUND SPENSER, ESQ.

Men ask me, what is this peculiar shape,
The unaltered and confusing dragon-span
Of tedious perceptions, which doth gape
Its maw against their commonplace and clan.
Well, it is my mind. And it is man.
And it is you, old pious courtly hack:
I am unveiling books of you, whose plan
You dared not quite concede, not quite attack.
Brother, now your saddened earth sinks back
Into its drop of light. Reunions pale,
Your flowered imaginations, your misty track
Of metaphysical chapters, mythic trail—
All clarifies once more, resumes its glass;
Time doth unfold what longtime bundled was.

JAMES FRANKLIN LEWIS