AFTER THE WATER IS GONE
(by Frank Milenski)

After the water is gone, what do I see?
I see things that are foreign to me.
The dream of the men that used to be,
The pioneers who by their ingenuity
Built the canals with horses and mules that pulled
the slips tied on with a whippletree.
The men with the old transits putting in the stakes of the grade
of the canal that would be.
The old timers looking at the wooden headgates and the twenty
foot culverts that from the canal turned the water free.
To water the land broken from prairie,
The land of the rattlesnake and sage brush,
turned into irrigated land to grow food for you and me.
The land that the settlers homesteaded--that the U.S. Government
gave them free
To start a civilization in the West so all the world could see
The glory of nature and man working in harmony.

And now what do I see?
I see the cities growing
Bold and wanting much more of what is a necessity
To be used they say for the finer things of life,
Or so they say to me.
To develop green belts and golf courses
and things they say need be.
To have in the garden, grass and shrubs and the prosy
that are grown by the water of the farmers that used to be.
The water is supposed to produce recreation for those
whose time is free.
The cities have to have supplies for as far as you can see.
Not withstanding that mama nature is the one
that says what will be.
It is not a case of pulling up the belts in time of scarcity.
If you live in a city
you are instilled to have the luxury,
Of having a supply of water for the next century.
It is not what is to be used as a necessity,
as the farmers put up with nature in good time and adversity.

I know water flow up hill to money.
It used to be it was a battle of the have-knots and the haves
as agriculture in its way of life used the most valuable
thing it's plain to see.
Now that the people who till the soil are down to
two percent or three
And the God all mighty
dollar has all the power to be,
The people in agriculture have fallen on hard times and misery.
And yet, Roosevelt said food would win the war and write
the peace after victory.
God help the people if all the water Brains are in Washington
and the politically are to be the judge in every case.
Common sense has to be a sustaining light.
In a time of the farmers trying to keep the wolf from the door
came the bargains galore
For developers and the fast buck artists,
the ones who rich in one stroke want to be.
The water they could grab from drilling holes and augmentation
which they say are produced by men of three--
H2O to you and me.
One of the reasons the Canal Company people are broke
is it takes money to protect what you thought was a property
right from the guy who'd like to have it for free
And now to a water court go those
who want a change of use to be.
In all the pomp and ceremony
go the learned lawyers for a fee.
The lawyer being a professional debater has to use all his

cunning, you see.
When as a witness they call a man with a pedigree
He has graduated from college and has a string of letters
of his education for all to see.
Makes no difference if a Mexican dragline (an irrigating shovel)
on his back he has not packed with glee,
Or how long a tenure on the river he has had,
it's what the book says, you see.
I know the learned Judge has great decisions
for the facts presented to him he must sort with great care
And make a decision just and brave that will withstand a Supreme
Court appeal in the face of a lawyer who wants to rave--
a lawyer whose reputation has to be upheld to help his image
as the famous water lawyer that he would like to be.

Now I know water was put on this earth to be used as a necessity,
It just may be that the food we produce by water to the
land is a blessing for you and me.
And the fact that generally speaking no one goes to bed hungry
may be one of the greatest Blessings that there will ever be.
The day in this country when to the grocer you do go,
and find that all the food to which you've grown accustomed
has become a luxury,
Just may be the time when some of the smart ones will have to eat
the smog that they helped to be.
Surely there are users of water in the country
That should draw some kind of use at home
where the water should be.
When you push people by droves to the cities
they miss the greatest joy of life, you see.
On a farm all my life I have spent--it develops humility.
To live with wonders of nature has been a privilege to me.
So I hope to God there will always be a place to farm for others
who believe like me.
It was, I think, the wish of the Lord that the earth be used—otherwise, why would it be?
To use the earth with care
to use it any other way no one should dare.
But if we wish to survive, I surely hope the do-goobers are not
the ones we depend on for the groceries in times to be.
For a city to survive in the style they have projected will be,
without storage of water, under the Colorado Constitution the
right to appropriate unappropriated water should always be.
So maybe a storage of water is a necessity.
It might just keep the water on the farms to be used at where it
ought to be.
In the Arkansas Valley the land to be dried up you see.
At the present time water sold adds up almost to a hundred square
miles of dried up land with a future that's not good to see.
Twa better the land had not been broken from sod than to grow
weeds and produce a land of misery.
There are people who say grass without water can grow on the land
after the water is taken to the cities.
Now, between you and me and the gatepost, I have lived in
Colorado all my life, but now I come from Missouri—show me!
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