

David Lee

Canyonlands, Eden

O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
Paradise Lost IV, 358

Russian thistle, goatheads
and redroots

line the scraped streets
of the failed
Desert Paradise subdivision

clutching a derelict's treasure
of broken bottles, smashed concrete,

an abandoned '64 Ford Fairlane,
iron rebar and twisted metal roofing,
a rusted bedsprings,

half sheets of pressed wood
warped and bloated

in the Utah sun,
and a child's naked doll
staring from a septic ditch
into the pale sky.

The project's dancing brook
gagged with tamarisk,

tatters of colored grocery bags
hang limp as abandoned surrender flags
from the barbed wire
surrounding the ruined compound.

Out of a blue ceiling
ripe with sunlight

huge windborne snowflakes
from the clouds stuffed
behind the La Sals
drift over the devil's garden

like Milton's doomed angels
leaping over Heaven's wall
a falling through Chaos.