**Landscape with Legend at 30,000 Feet.**

My grand-father crossed these mountains with a yoke of oxen, goaded over a stubborn continent by his enormous appetite for the impossible. I fly the way he came.

From here, the green jackstrawed with white is pleasant pattern. Here we play bridge, play status, or turn our minds off to play audience. Whatever game he played, he played for keeps.

In this the river where his raft capsized, spoiling coffee and flour, drowning an ox, breaking his lively wrist? The deep-incised channel with repeating tributaries lies static as sculpture.

Here we sip wine of grape he did not live to grow, while white-rimmed alkali lakes that tortured man and beast gleam blue below.

I share no matching thirst for hardship, yet my heritage retains that will which made him dare vast distances. Along my bones the branching veins pattern themselves like his, whereby I read his vanished thought, and I too bear the sign which drove him on to his self-chosen goal. As I to mine.

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