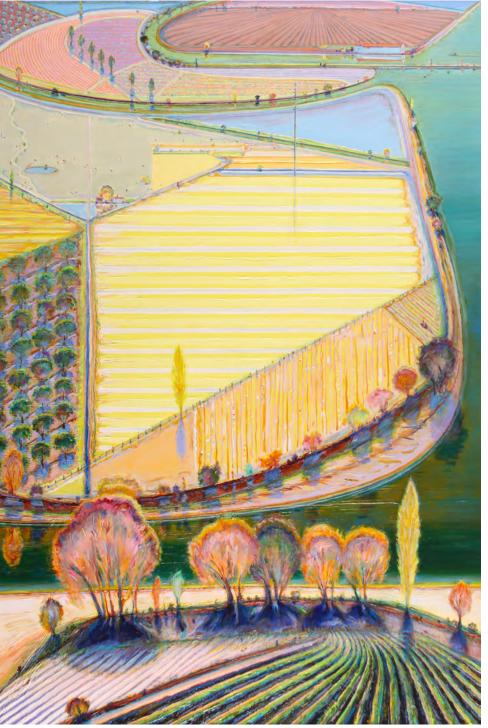
## **WAYNE THIEBAUD**

Green River Lands, 1998 oil on canvas, 72 x 48 in.



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## **BRYNN SAITO**

## The Exile

If you are the country then I am a prisoner cast into exile

making my way to our shore home in dreams then waking in the north

where stone drives me mad. Now the world is a free thing: formless and stark.

Tin cans everywhere. Rain filling the tin then spilling over.

There are no names for this—
the charge of a river

flooding the embers shaking free roots of the oldest trees.

Today my grief turned to a dream—a desire for home. The desire filled me.

The dream itself was its own kind of paradise—false but perfect

bearing the details of our wild life, the spectral lines of a world wrung dry.

I could have waded forever in the familiar dark but I chose flight—

or succumbed to its leanness—and left you in the river.
Then I leapt into lightning.

Brynn Saito is the author of *The Palace of Contemplating Departure*, winner of the Benjamin Saltman Poetry Award and forthcoming from Red Hen Press in March 2013. Her poetry has been anthologized by Helen Vendler and Ishmael Reed; it has also appeared in *Ninth Letter*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Pleiades* and *Drunken Boat*. Visit her at www.brynnsaito.com.

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