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Lone Peak

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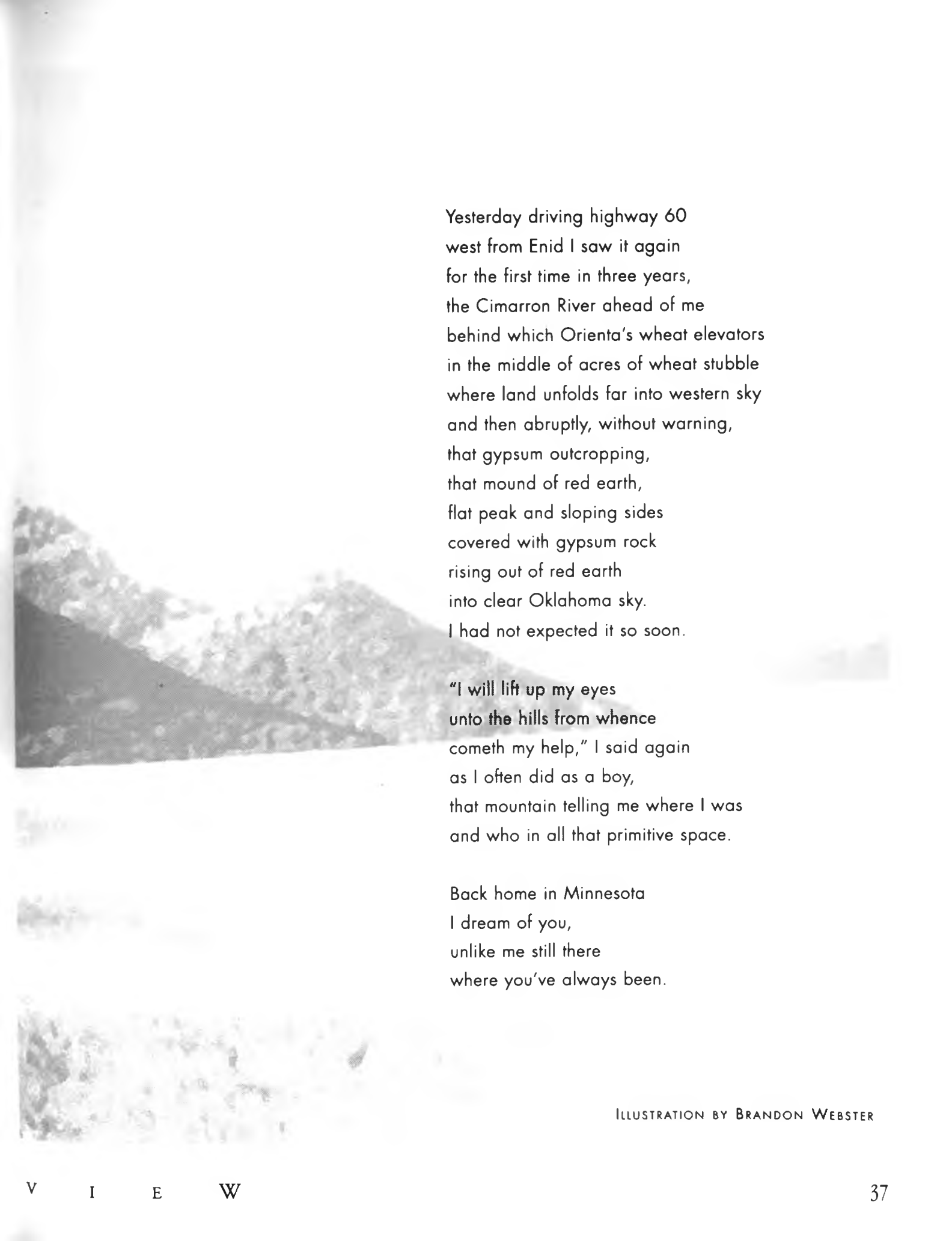
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LONE PEAK

by Elmer Suderman

It was always there,
a lone sentinel on the northern edge
of a low rim of hills
we called Gloss Mountains,
unless a thunder shower
coming from Alva or Woodward
concealed it for a little while.
Civilizations ten thousand years
old knew it. Cherokees and Comanches
took their bearings from it.
It told those who made the run
into the Cherokee Strip
where they were and steadied them as it later
steadied me, the son of one
who made the run and homesteaded
a quarter section of that good earth.



Yesterday driving highway 60
west from Enid I saw it again
for the first time in three years,
the Cimarron River ahead of me
behind which Orienta's wheat elevators
in the middle of acres of wheat stubble
where land unfolds far into western sky
and then abruptly, without warning,
that gypsum outcropping,
that mound of red earth,
flat peak and sloping sides
covered with gypsum rock
rising out of red earth
into clear Oklahoma sky.
I had not expected it so soon.

"I will lift up my eyes
unto the hills from whence
cometh my help," I said again
as I often did as a boy,
that mountain telling me where I was
and who in all that primitive space.

Back home in Minnesota
I dream of you,
unlike me still there
where you've always been.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRANDON WEBSTER