

**The Sinks of Gandy**

It's a long way from here to that remote place  
Of scald and freeze, southeast of Wheeling  
And Morgantown, Clarksburg, Phillippi, Elkins  
To Bemis, but West of Cherry Grove and Judy Gap.

You study the map and think it is a place to go  
Without your wife, deep in the Cheat Mountains,  
By definition a depression on the land surface.  
You go and exchange the roundness in your face

For sharpness. You find it is not a garden  
Of double-breasted pink roses or passion slowly  
Spent. You find a tracked rut, goats scuttle  
Over rocks, there is pain in your knees and hips.

A man stands by a sweating horse and utters  
His name; they have killed him, he says. Another  
Sits alone and cracks his knuckles; a third  
Stares at his feet; a fourth tells you when

The coldness comes you will wrap yourself in skins  
And wait for some witless stranger to pass by—  
To amuse you. A fifth curses his memory, remembers  
Shambling along between armed guards. For a moment

Steam curls from water in the Sinks; you pray  
That what you don't understand is still far off.  
You wipe your forehead with a handkerchief and leave  
To tend the world you still know still in your life....

*Daniel James Sundahl*