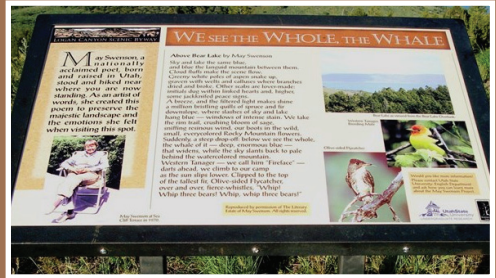


"Above Bear Lake"

by May Swenson

Sky and lake the same blue,
and blue the languid mountain between them.
Cloud fluffs make the scene flow.
Greeny white pools of aspen snake up,
graven with welts and calluses where branches
dried and broke. Other scabs are lover-made:
Initials dug within linked hearts and, higher
some jackknifed peace signs.
A breeze, and the filtered light makes shine
a million bristling quills of spruce and fir
downslope, where slashes of sky and lake
hang blue — windows of intense stain. We take
the rim trail, crushing bloom of sage,
sniffing resinous wind, our boots in the wild,
small, everycolored Rocky Mountain flowers.
Suddenly, a steep drop-off: below we see the whole,
the whale of it — deep, enormous blue —
that widens, while the sky slants back to pale
behind a watercolored mountain.
Western Tanager — we call him "Fireface" —
darts ahead, we climb to our camp
as the sun slips lower. Clipped to the top
of the tallest fir, Olive-sided Flycatcher,
over and over, fierce-whistles, "Whip!
Whip three bears! Whip, whip three bears!"



Memorial plaque

An interpretive sign at the Bear Lake Scenic Overlook is devoted to a poem by May Swenson, inspired by the view of the lake from that location and a hike on a nearby trail. Born in Logan in 1936, Swenson went on to national acclaim. She wrote the poem "Above Bear Lake" on a visit back to Cache Valley.

Utah State University students and professors, led by student Natalie Hatch, worked five years on gaining approvals for design and installation of the plaque. It was dedicated in 2011.