
creature has become *gossamer dragon/less image than thought/and the thought come alive*. Something else, too, has changed in the poet's consciousness since the earlier poem, in which he paid a "tithe of awe" with his attention. In "The Catch," a child asks, "May I look?" *You may look, child, all you want./ This prize belongs to no one./ But you will pay all/ Your life for the privilege, all your life.*

Science & Technology

THE CALIFORNIA WATER ATLAS

edited by William L. Kahrl
Kaufmann (1 First St.,
Los Altos, Calif. 94022), 1979
118 pp. \$37.50
L of C 78-620062
ISBN 0-913232-68-8

When Americans turn on their faucets, water flows. (The average U.S. city-dweller uses 150 gallons of water daily—mostly for washing, cooking, and cleaning.) Few give much thought to where it comes from and how it gets into their homes. Filled with color maps, charts, tables, and photos, this book explains water supply, delivery, and use in the nation's most populous state. Two-thirds of water-scarce California's rainfall occurs in the northern one-third of the state; the mean annual rainfall in extensive areas east of Los Angeles is less than 10 inches. Crop irrigation accounts for 91 percent of the state's water use; 5 percent goes for domestic purposes; and manufacturing consumes 1 percent. The history of water management in California mirrors the story of the state's growth. During the 1860s, a growing population regarded marshes, tidelands, and swamps as obstacles to settlement; reclamation was begun. The 1887 Wright Act set up local irrigation districts as agriculture assumed a central role in the economy. With the increasing concentration of people in cities after 1911, a new grid of municipal and county water lines was imposed. Today, 3,700 agencies direct the flow of California's precious water by means of a vast computerized system controlling dams on the state's lakes, rivers, and reservoirs. Novelist Joan Didion said it best: "The apparent ease of California life is an illusion."