

1. THE SAGUARO'S CHILDREN ADAPT

WHAT IS THAT! WHERE?! WHERE?!

ON THE NORTH SLOPE! THERE! THERE!

AREN'T YOU LOOKING? CAN'T YOU SEE?
I AM ASTONISHED! HOW CAN IT BE?

ON THE RIM OF THE HILL
WITH DISCIPLES ALL AROUND
A SLENDER FIGURE YOUNG AND STILL
SPRINGING FROM THE BLASTED GROUND

MY GRAND CHILD? MY GREAT GRAND CHILD?

YES THERE!
FLOWERS IN HER ARMS - IN HER HAIR
IN SUCH A FORBIDDING PLACE

NOTHING GROWS ON THE NORTH SLOPE!
IN COLD SHADE
NOTHING GROWS ON THE NORTH SLOPE!
AND IS NOT AFRAID

BUT HER CHILDREN ARE SPRINGING UP
BY THEIR NURSES - TINY AS WREN'S EGGS
MY SLENDER GRAND DAUGHTER
GROWING GREEN AND BRIGHT WITH HOPE

WITH ALL MY GREAT GRANDCHILDREN
THEY ARE WAVING! WAVING TO YOU!

FROM THE NORTH SLOPE
THE NORTH SLOPE!

2. THE SAGUARO DOES NOT LOVE THE RAIN

(A Pantoum - The pantoum is a poem of any length, composed of four-line stanzas in which the second and fourth lines of each stanza serve as the first and third lines of the next stanza. The last line of a pantoum is often the same as the first.)

I AM TOO OLD TO LEARN TO LOVE THE RAIN
THE FICKLE RAIN THAT MAY OR MAY NOT FALL
ITS PALTRY KISSES ONLY CAUSE ME PAIN
SO LITTLE CAN BE WORSE THAN NONE AT ALL

THE FICKLE RAIN THAT MAY OR MAY NOT FALL
WITH MEAGRE TEARS UPON THE DESERT PLAIN
SO LITTLE CAN BE WORSE THAN NONE AT ALL
SO LITTLE HAVE I THIRSTED FOR IN VAIN

THOSE MEAGRE TEARS UPON THE DESERT PLAIN
A TORRENT INFINITESIMALLY SMALL
SO LITTLE HAVE I THIRSTED FOR IN VAIN
FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS BEYOND RECALL

A TORRENT INFINITESIMALLY SMALL
OF TEARS OR KISSES ONLY BRINGS ME PAIN
THOUGH I HAVE TRIED FOR YEARS BEYOND RECALL
I AM TOO OLD TO LEARN TO LOVE THE RAIN

3. The Saguaro's Surrender

I GIVE UP
I THROW DOWN MY ARMS
I FALL

I LEAVE ONLY MY BONES
STANDING LONELY
AND TALL

I GIVE UP

I AM CONTENT TO DIE
MY SKELETON SCRATCHING
THE THIN
INDIGO SKIN
OF THE SKY

I GIVE UP

I HAVE DONE ALL I CAN
BUT THERE IS NO SURVIVING
THIS VIRUS
CALLED MAN

4. THE SAGUARO'S LULLABY

In 1930 a thirteen-year-old boy planted himself on a chair wedged high in the arms of a Saguaro for five days while trying to set a world record.

A GENTLE TOUCH, A TENDER CARESS
I HAVE NEVER KNOWN THESE CHARMS
BUT NOW YOU'VE COME WITH YOUR LITTLE CHAIR
AND SET IT THERE IN MY BRISTLING ARMS

I WILL HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU
EVER CAREFUL, NEVER TIGHT
I WILL HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU
ALL THE DAY AND ALL THE NIGHT

YOU'RE TINY AND YOUNG, I'M OLD AND STRONG
AND I LONG FOR YOU TO STAY
ALOFT AND CLOSE IN YOUR LITTLE CHAIR
NO ONE TO SCARE OR LURE YOU AWAY

I WILL HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU
IN SURRENDER, IN DELIGHT
I WILL HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU, HOLD YOU
ALL THE DAY AND ALL THE NIGHT

YOUR BODY IS SOFT, MY SPINES ARE SHARP
YOU CARESS, I TEAR AND PIERCE
YET WE EMBRACE THE BITTER NIGHT THROUGH
BOTH LOVING AND TRUE, FORGIVING AND FIERCE

HOW YOU HOLD ME, HOLD ME, HOLD ME,
FROM YOUR CRADLE'S GIDDY HEIGHT
HOW YOU HOLD ME, HOLD ME, HOLD ME
ALL THE DAY AND ALL THE NIGHT

5. The Cactus Wren Moves In

In the exclusive Saguaro Estates.

Available now!

Custom built.

A rare gem.

Neat and snug and bristling with amenities.

And of course, spikes.

Protection, privacy and room to expand.

Fine dining at your doorstep.

And the view, what a view!

Move in ready and I'm ready too.

Fulfill us, don't kill us

Say yes, yes do.

And I'll move in with you.

6. THE SAGUARO'S PRAYER

I RAISE MY ARMS TO YOU WIDE HEAVEN
IN REVERENCE
IN GRATITUDE

WHEN YOU HONOUR ME WITH HARDSHIP
I REJOICE

WHEN YOU BLESS ME
WITH DELUGE AND DUST
WITH FROST AND FIRE
I REJOICE

I REJOICE IN YOUR GIFT OF MANY WOUNDS
THE BEAKS OF TINY BIRDS
THE HEAT OF LONG DAYS
THE SUN AT REST
ON THE SHIMMERING BREAST OF THE DESERT

I REJOICE IN THE BITE
OF DEEP NIGHT
THE ROCK CRACKING
THE MONSOON FLOODING

I GIVE YOU ALL I HAVE
MY WHITE FLOWERS
THEIR BLOSSOMS MELLON-SCENTED
MY RED FRUIT BURSTING WITH DARK SEED
I LAY THEM
ON THE ALTER OF YOUR ETERNAL SAND

IN EXULTATION I RAISE MY ARMS
IN ADULATION I RAISE MY ARMS
IN WONDER I RAISE MY ARMS

I REJOICE
I REJOICE