

Spring 1973

Notes for Albuquerque

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NOTES FOR ALBUQUERQUE

"There is a screw loose
in the public machinery somewhere."
Schoolcraft on the BIA, 1828

I.

Threads spiral toward a center,
turn on fingers of freezing children.
One boy ran, scared by routine, a glaring sun.
Hiding three days,
they found him blistered.
He fell asleep in Math, stupid.
Call him a fire-eyed coyote,
a berry in the paw of a bear.
"Cut the heat
in Arizona. It's warm there."

II.

Beware of wind.
Apache nights dry the morning. Why hatred
in Ronan? They watch Red Sky Sun Down
make an x. Her knowledge could protect
the bees. "We must help the boarding schools,
get water from Gila Community,
dam it in the mountains."
No rain in three years. Phoenix thrives.

III.

A man was promoted today. Now an assistant commissioner
dreams of junior high and Shakespeare.
"Dark skinned savages with wailing songs."
Dimpled girls once teased his stutter.
He no longer listens. Children are sick
in Santa Rosa. At Salt River,
work Math on toilet paper.

IV.

Lose this hurt,
a trestle lost to canyons. Our ground
is now legend. Dew smokes along
Ska na wis. The circle of meeting trees
north of the Lawrence gives way to moss.
Children are sick in Santa Rosa.
We give away to this deepening thunder.
The sand knows lizards and coyotes.
Only owls have homes.