

*Joshua Tree, California, April 10, 2004*

## MOJAVE CODES

Can lead you through a weather wall on a dry lake  
 Sunshine on the left — rain on the right  
 While blue skies & a breeze take hard semantic turns  
 Over muddy mirrors in washes dotted with pools  
 & wildflowers, out in acres after yesterday's rain  
 Make sweetness signs for the nose and the eyes

In the distance a chalky ridge points a finger to heaven  
 Revealing its source of what cannot be snow  
 Off to the west a buffalo herd of volcanic rocks  
 Runs a rainbow figure into an apron of dirt  
 & waves of heat vapor rise from the salt flat  
 Telegraphing the event to clouds and birds

Semicolons crawl through bony sockets at my feet  
 Busy in a bighorn skull long empty of sheep  
 Some other critter moved in & died before the ants came  
 & unwrapped the meaning of moisture in flesh  
 Below them is an ungrammatical pothole  
 & a cactus bud about to thank the rain

Jackrabbit, a tortoise, joshua trees on the plateau  
 Fabulous fixings for mesquite tea talk  
 Nested in bottle caps & cans & other culture markers  
 Dried out & preserved like sheep skulls  
 Commercials for Twenty Mule Team Borax soap  
 & Frankie Lane songs about wild geese

Desert texts can make you remember Hansel & Gretel  
 Heat stroke & a horse with no name  
 They can satisfy your thirst for knowledge  
 & make you late for the dance of the dead  
 They can also make you sing, especially after a rain  
 You just have to give them time