

QUIJOTOA

1. Quijotoa

with their big hands
they made huge platters of mud,

tossed them into the sky
where they tumble, chains of white moons
over lava peaks.

girded with long wooden swords,
caps feathered from sleeping birds,
they strode over the muddy valleys
and crisscrossed rock,
knocked down the doors of mud huts;
with their big hands
wrung out the sandy milk
from the breasts of skinny girls ...

in the reeds
they waited for orphaned deer
and slit their tendons;
and on a sunny day
they took the stubs of oak trees
and cut their faces, smiling,
high up on limestone cliffs.

they made baskets of willow suckers
and caulked them with mud,
and cutting places for their ears,
put them on their heads,
sat down,
and never say a word.

2. Ali Chukson

by the tank
they sat in a circle,
amused by pretty snakes
which wriggled out between their teeth.

they sat on their haunches
and dug their sharp heels into the sand,
while above them the windmill
went round and around.

a fox came out
and they scratched him behind the ears,
cut him a slice of watermelon,
dressed him in a blanket,

while atop Baboquivari mountain
the lady coyote peaked over the rim
of her basket, came out and
stood on her porch, watching them.

3. Gu Achi

in the middle of the afternoon
a huge white steer
charged through the village

and the schoolchildren ran out,
pelting him with candy;
and they all saw him disappear into the bushes,
carrying away the wash on his horns.

that night they watched a huge red bull
float along the dark plain of the horizon,
a rose clenched in his teeth.

4. Tat Momoli

he cut her belly open
with a sycamore stick
and the water ran over the land.
the snakes swam up into the trees,
all the foxes were looking for boards.

they chased the chickens into the house,
and when it came up to the door
sat their babies up on the shelves.

but out of a cloud
came a band of wooden men,
arms pivoting at the shoulders,

picked them up, and they scrambled in,
pulling strings of red peppers after them.

5. Gu Komelik

he had a big hat
which he used
to chase the birds away.

on clear afternoons he'd go off
to the mountains; come back
with it filled with juniper twigs
for his tea.

they said he had
a secret hole in the ground
where he'd sit and speak
to his after-self.

for he'd come back
with his hat full of stones
which he'd eat for bread.

6. Chiapuk

end of the road.
the girls took off their slippers
and walked away over the mountains

while behind them their skirts
flap on the line.

-- Peter Wild

Tucson, Arizona