

## **The Silent Invasion of Sogope**

The wind is borne on wings of eagles  
Through the arid southland of the ruddy sun,  
Where a Kikah shakes his sacred rattle  
To the *arf aroofing* of a Waahni's song.  
Nankah, kinsmen! Do you hear that breeze?  
The flutist's parched reeds flutter subtly sweet.  
A message, surely, from the Southern wind.  
"What is it, chieftain?"  
I know not still.

*We are the Newe. The Shoshone.*

Soon the boomed galumphing of a hundred hooves is heard,  
Rattling earthen kettledrums and shaking our dry bones.  
Unearthly beasts; bison-strong, deer-sleek, eagle-fast;  
Dashing through the woodcarved canyons, are distantly revered,  
Sent, perhaps, by the foreign wind  
To gift us her own speed.  
"What are they, chieftain?"  
I know not still.

*We are the snake-people. The wolf-servants.*

The wind returns sweet, but sickly now,  
Bringing whiffs of distant temples' stone,  
From the place where feathers paint rainbows,  
And Yagwatsa' croak a midnight song.  
Nankah, kinsmen! Do you hear that moan?  
Plague in the camps,  
Death in the camps,  
Brought to us by the traitorous wind!  
"What shall we do, chieftain?"  
I know not still.

*We are grass house people. The warriors.*

The silent army is before us,  
The deathless killer is before us.  
How can we fight when we cannot see?  
For twenty suns the fever runs,  
The lesions grow, the pimples spread,  
The pus congeals, the blood bleeds red,  
The bodies stiffen, falling dead.  
We who by chance survive,  
In sacred flame set the bodies to rise.  
Their names, like ashes, disappear in the night,  
Immortalized in legend; forever lost.  
"What has become of us, chieftain?"  
I know still not.

*We are the lost ones. The vanquished.*