

Father Christmas in the Desert

the plagues continue

flood
drought
freeze

clap
crabs
locusts

and now an indiscriminate itch
in the legs at odd moments
especially at night when in bed
when I try to fall asleep

thinking about the law of the land
west of the Pecos and east of the sun

It's Christmastime at the end of my thirty-ninth year
under the full moon in Gemini according to astrologers
in Taurus according to astronomers, east-north-east
over the Swiss helms in the evening in any case,
west-north-west over the Mules by morning. Smoke
from the Douglas smelter clouds the sunrise. The chill
lingers longer than normal. The white-crowned sparrows
stay longer among the blackened branches of mesquite
waiting for the warmth of day before they feed or sing.
It's dry, so the irrigation pump at the alfalfa factory
is running, growling down the north wind away from me
for a change. This poem is spoken to the wind and written
on sand. If it fills your eyes and lungs breathe deep
and close them. This is a medicine poem of clear blue skies,
shining waters and green plants everywhere on the red earth.
This poem is not radioactive or poisonous with brimstone,
arsenic and lead. This poem is not for sale. This poem is free.

From Mr America Drives His Car