

## **Early Autumn**

Early autumn. The summer rains  
a month late and buckets short.  
Far better than the nothing we got last year  
but the washes still not running, the ponds still dry.

But even so, from the little we got  
the mountains have turned green again,  
the nights cool enough for a good sleep,  
the roadsides covered with yellow flowers  
whose names I can't remember it's been so long.

All afternoon dragonflies and swallows  
dart through the air after insects that like the flowers  
seem to have popped up out of nowhere.

As the sun sets behind scarlet tatters of cloud  
and the full moon, enormous and bloodred  
from wildfire haze rises out of the mountains,  
the buzzards come home to roost in the cottonwoods,  
the slim-winged nighthawks careen through the sky,  
and the desert toads begin their love songs,  
a memory like a gentle breeze from the southeast  
passes through behind my eyes of how  
those who are gone were when they were here.