

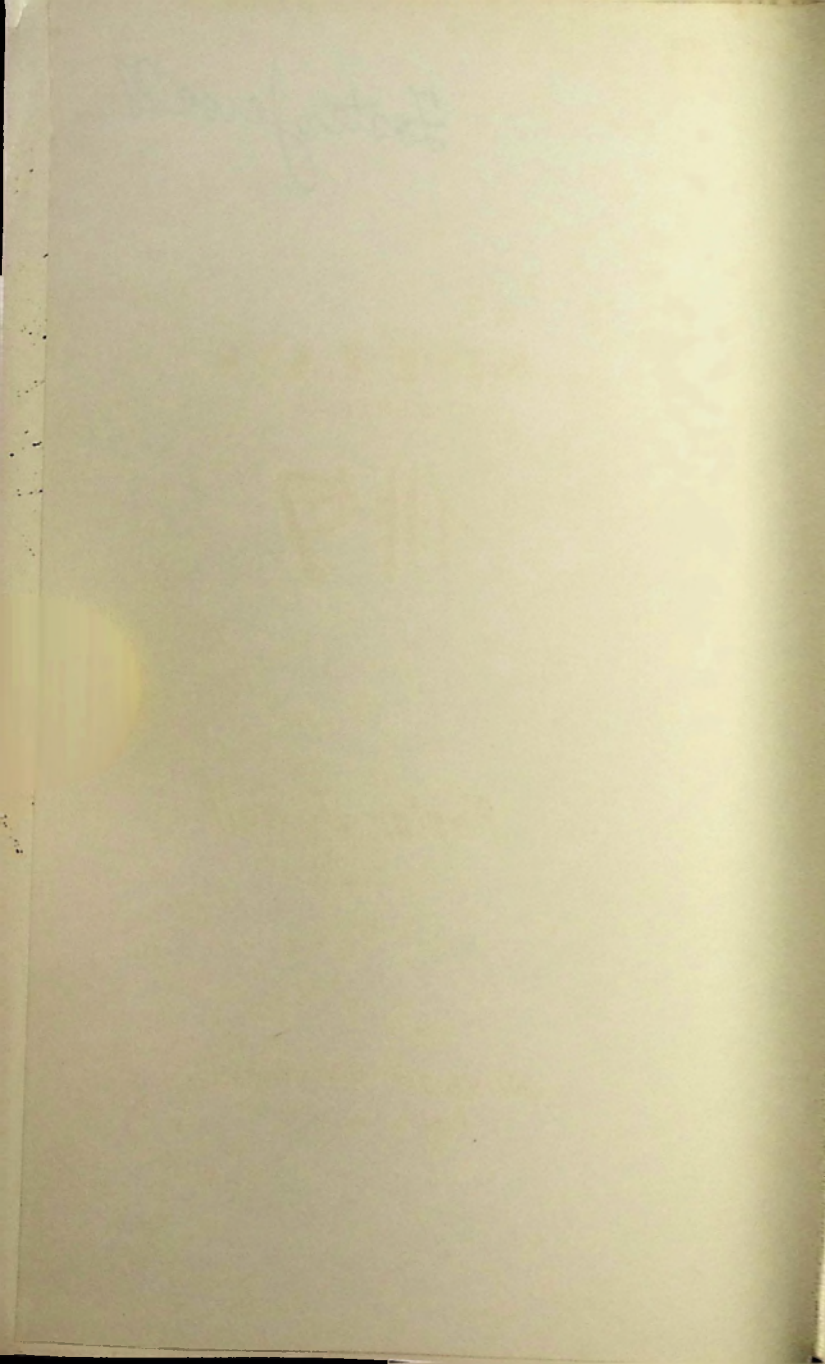


俳句

Foster Jewell



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NINE DAYS
ON THE DESERT

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*For
Nancy*



INTRODUCTION

It is always with both anticipation and awe that one steps into Foster Jewell's haiku world. This new volume, 9 DAYS ON THE DESERT, each day consisting of ten haiku, is a feast. Though we are again in the hard, unyielding land of saguaro and cholla, it is Mr. Jewell's art that this is not SAND WAVES country. He sees a known landscape with a new eye sensitively recording images in ways uniquely his.

Here we find the reverberating silences for which Mr. Jewell is deservedly famous. Consider the poignant stillness of:

"More lone my shadow
with ever longer strides
leaving the sun behind."

No facet of his art escapes this poet.
Here is humor:

"Under stress
the stink bug stands on his head.
Wishing him well."

Foster Jewell is bound by no rigid "rules" of haiku, each one taking the shape it needs for its moment. The ninety haiku flow on like the desert itself. One knows that an art apparently so effortless has been carefully crafted, even though his gift of the "seeing eye" is innate, a gift of wonder and keen perception which, in turn, is a gift to the reader. His book gives us once again the precise use of language, the unusual verbs so aptly used, that we have come to expect from this poet who loves words as much as he loves the natural world.

This volume is more varied than anything Foster Jewell has previously done. Each day is a different day, not only literally, but in the vision brought to bear.

With 9 DAYS ON THE DESERT, Foster Jewell reaches a higher plateau than perhaps any he himself had previously visioned.

Geraldine Clinton Little
Mt. Holly, N. J.
March 31, 1975

THE FIRST DAY

*Dawn on the desert -
Everything looking new,
everything so old.*

*Palo verdes -
light on their kind of greenness
flowing down the dry wash.*

*Where the desert road ends,
the cadence as footsteps sing
the song of the sand.*

*Haven of an outcrop
with cool look of a pool -
"frosted" with salts ...*

*Toward the mirage
a staggering dust devil . . .
not making it.*

*A grayness
where the blue lake was,
the softened horizon.*

*On the stillness of dunes
the sand waltzes
up and over.*

*Cloud shadows and mine
wallowing up and over
sand dune swells.*

*Rising from a sea of sand,
the unbelievable moon -
not vanishing!*

*Voice of the coyote...
filling the void
of this empty land.*

THE SECOND DAY

*The long gone sun
come back to its desert:
at first it feels so good.*

*Job well along,
the buzzards taking their time
this morning.*

*Gravel flying -
tearing up the arroyo -
roadrunner's wild eye.*

*Buzzard performance ...
but after a while
the mourning dove song.*

*Drifting off all by itself
so much of the time -
the smoke tree.*

*Quail and I
searching dry arroyos -
and still no blue sky.*

*First spring shower -
and flooding dry arroyo
comes the canyon wren song.*

*Watching each shower
give new ripple rhythms
to the sand waves.*

*Walking stick -
the wonder of him,
the wonder of me...*

*After coyote call
the looking all around
for the difference - not there.*

THE THIRD DAY

*The empty blue,
the reaches of the dunes -
then sky-sail of yucca bloom.*

*The small side canyon -
greeted by yucca bells,
there, where spring belongs.*

*Prisoned in thorns
blooms of cholla cactus
silently calling me.*

*Wind and sun
playing a silent duet
in golden tones of poppies.*

Resting.
The buzzards come
to see how I do.

Under stress
the stink bug stands on his head.
Wishing him well.

*The coyote -
all his starts and stops -
I smile to myself.*

*Rain! rain! rain!
and rising among sand waves
new-born isles of verbena.*

*The campfire embers
scatting the raindrops
going ss-t! ss-t!*

*Through saguaro thorns
the wind's querying -
peremptory owl.*

THE FOURTH DAY

*The liveness of night camps,
and at sunrise,
the closeness of tell-tale tracks.*

*Left to themselves
small flocks of fog
wander off up side canyons.*

*The shepherd dreams along,
sometimes watching his flock...
the cloud shadows...*

*Desert magic -
to find it
in palo verde's leafless green.*

*By abandoned mine shaft -
bones . . .
and the glitter of pyrites.*

*Finding it wilting -
what my book calls
the "Live-forever" flower.*

*One "Desert Trumpet" -
then echoing all around
more and more and more.*

*Darkness nears,
and there, the "Ghost Flower,"
real - and living!*

*Passed an hour ago:
those smelly sunflowers -
could be "wild artichoke"!*

*Desert flowers closing,
but in the western sky
the clouds ...*

THE FIFTH DAY

*Waking in moonlight -
wind-in-smoke-tree...
or whatever it is...*

*In utter stillness
the dropping sounds...
my burro sighs.*

*Calmness of floating moon
nearing canyon waterfall . . .
Good Heavens!*

*Haunting dim shadows,
fireflies everywhere -
remains of the old moon.*

*Stars hasten westward.
Their first fluttering -
breeze-wakened sycamore leaves.*

*Wind at dawn
and where the campfire died
ashes dancing.*

*Watching ferns
caught nodding by leaping brook
jump back - and do it again!*

*Sizing up strange footprints,
when humping along
comes the measuring worm.*

*At sundown
the sparrow's one-note song
telling it all.*

*Silence ...
then into the dome of night
my burro bawls!*

THE SIXTH DAY

*No "fool's gold":
desert sky and desert dunes
at sunrise.*

*The snake and I
filled with mutual respect
taking our leaves.*

*The silent communing
with the tortoise in his shell
and I in mine.*

*Bit of conglomerate:
motionless horned toad -
the too bright eyes...*

*The horned toad and I
gazing at the marvel
of whatever we are ...*

*Lost in the sun,
poetry of eagle wings
coming out of the blue.*

*Expecting company,
he puts a curl in his tail -
the scorpion ...*

*Dreaming...
the inconstant world of cloud
moving away.*

*A common crow and I
floating over clouds
in arroyo pool.*

*The coyote calls
from his far world -
suddenly, his nearness.*

THE SEVENTH DAY

*Through the night
faint stirrings and shadows -
the wakeful desert.*

*Color in the east -
down burrows go the gleaners -
back to night.*

*Night shift goes to ground;
sun in the high hawk's eye
and his brood calling.*

*Here, grazing sheep;
over misty ridges
drift flocks of chamisa*

*To wander on
loose as the cactus wren
singing in cholla thorns...*

*Tumbling and quarreling
raucous jays and water,
in Oak Creek Canyon.*

*Campers' "Mountain music" -
Against the bastion,
silent song of soaring wings.*

*The instant hush
when the sound of sh-h... sh-h...
comes from owl wings.*

*Happy Hunting Ground:
Orion with his dog
moving right along!*

*Canyon wind solo -
then
coyote chorus.*

THE EIGHTH DAY

*Finally fallen
Populous old saguaro -
owls' moving day.*

*The cottontail
promptly coming to attention
when I whistle.*

*Sand waves -
their way of still following
yesterday's winds.*

*This moment -
Monarch wings fanning the flames
of Prickly Pear blooms.*

*Threat of rain,
and where the moon should rise,
first shadow dance of smoke trees.*

*His nightful of thorns -
"Poor Wi-ull! Poor Wi-ull!"
wails the goatsucker.*

*On canyon walls
my campfire flares and fades
with echoing coyote calls.*

*While mind paces cell
that night imposes
ears shout mixed reports.*

*On my canvas roof
intermittent tap of the rain -
messages from space? ...*

*By lantern light
all the falling stars
this dripping night.*

THE NINTH DAY

*Morning dew drips from leaves.
With thankful gestures
the sparrow drinks.*

*The living and dying
on and under the ground ...
poppy opening.*

*Each for himself
from bobcat to lizard . . .
song of the goldfinch.*

*Even up hill
balls of baby quail
keep right on rolling.*

*Concerns of the quail
discussed by quail voices
so ineffably sweet ...*

*More lone my shadow
with ever longer strides
leaving the sun behind.*

*Heaven's nearness
with moon and evening star
sharing canyon pool with me.*

*Tingling
as my campfire light
follows the eyes of a fox.*

*My shadow
going forth
into darkness.*

*From vanishing world
a last coyote call,
and final silence.*

My shadow
going down
into darkness

From reaching night
a last, swift fall
and final sleep

