

Meteor Shower over Tucson

November 18, 2001

For Brian and Patrick

3 a.m. stars were holding
brightly tight to their dome
as desert chill challenged three
watchers alarmed from bed.

The Big Dipper's handle
had fallen straight down,
but upness was everywhere
and never all to be taken in.

Earthbound, we flashlit our
paths around backyard cacti
while overhead, quick meteors
like flaming needles pierced
and sewed at the night.

Several arrived each minute
but seldom did any two
claim the same piece of sky.
Some blazed up so bright
they lit up the desert floor--
doubt but believe.

We embodied three generations,
we watchers who stood or sat
or reclined on a blanket.
Endless depth boggled our eyes
yet we little asked and less knew
why we were alive just then.

Boy, father, grandfather were we.
What all might have happened
or not happened in our three lives
to cause any of us to be absent?

We had beaten unmathematical odds
to meet for this familial, communal
sky harvest, as had the listening lizards
who heard our "Hey!" and "Whoa!"
and "Did you see that one?"

And how better to bond
than under a needled infinity?