

SING DOWN THE RAIN

written by Judi Moreillon

- Narrator: A dusty land bakes. Its washes run dry.
The blazing hot sun hovers high in the sky.
Cicadas make music, a sharp scraping sound.
The spreading mesquite trees hang close to the ground.
- This spiny land's home to rattlers and quails
And shy little rabbits with soft cotton tails,
Coyotes who howl and sing to the moon,
And mourning doves cooing their sorrowful tune.
- Tortoises plod with their homes on their backs,
And the sand records time with animal tracks.
When the sun is white hot, in May and in June;
This dry land is waiting - rain will come soon.
- In this desert land live the People who know
How to sing down the rain that makes the crops grow.
A sacred tradition, the elders explain
How wind brings the clouds and clouds bring the rain.
- Clouds: Life-giving clouds, overflowing with light,
Will wait for the wind to send them in flight.
They swell up with rain that's waiting to fall
To bring cooling water for one and for all.
- Saguaros: Tall cactus with arms curving graceful and thin
Will reach out for water when cool rains begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the rain washing over hard ground.
- Clouds: The life-giving clouds, full of moisture and light,
Form over far mountains, still out of sight.
Clouds swollen with rain that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling water for one and for all.

- Flowers: Saguaro's white flowers will bloom by starlight.
 Reflecting the moon, they will brighten the night.
 These blooms become fruits, sweet, juicy and red.
 Their juice brings rain magic, the old stories said.
- Saguaros: Tall cactus with arms bending and thin
 Will swell up with water when sweet rains begin.
 With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
 They will soak up the rain washing over hard ground.
- Clouds: The life-giving clouds, reflecting sunlight,
 Float over far mountains, still out of sight.
 Clouds swollen with rain that's waiting to fall
 Will bring cooling water for one and for all.
- Women: In morning's soft light, the women arrive
 To pick the ripe fruits we will need to survive.
 In baskets of willow, woven so fine,
 They carry the fruits that will make sacred wine.
- Flowers: Saguaro's white flowers, brilliant and bright,
 Reflecting the moon, are like stars in the night.
 These blooms become fruits, sweet, juicy and red.
 Their juice brings rain magic, our grandparents said.
- Saguaros: Tall cactus with arms reaching out long and thin
 Will fatten with water when cloudbursts begin.
 With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
 They will soak up the rain washing over hard ground.
- Clouds: The life-giving clouds, so massive and white,
 Drift over far mountains, still out of sight.
 Clouds swollen with rain that's waiting to fall
 Will bring cooling water for one and for all.

- Grandparents: Grandfather's fire burns hot like the sun
And cooks the ripe fruits till the syrup is done.
Grandmother's basket is woven just so
To capture the seeds and let syrup flow.
- Women: In soft morning light, the women arrive
To harvest the fruits we will need to survive.
In baskets of willow, woven so fine,
They carry the fruits that will make sacred wine.
- Flowers: Saguaro's white flowers will bloom by starlight.
Reflecting the moon, they shine in the night.
These blooms become fruits, sweet, juicy and red.
Their juice brings rain magic, the elders have said.
- Saguaros: Tall cactus with arms curving graceful and thin
Will reach out for water when cool rains begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the rain washing over hard ground.
- Clouds: The life-giving clouds, tremendous and white,
Build over far mountains, still out of sight.
Clouds swollen with rain that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling water for one and for all.
- Medicine Man: Then catching the wind with the feathers he bound,
The medicine man makes circles around.
While the People hold hands and dance in a chain,
The singer's gourd rattle makes music like rain.
- Grandparents: Grandfather's fire burns hot like the sun.
It cooks the ripe fruits till the syrup is done.
Grandmother's basket is woven just so
To capture the seeds and let syrup flow.

Women: In morning's soft light, the women arrive
To pick the ripe fruits we will need to survive.
In baskets of willow, woven so fine,
They carry the fruits that will make sacred wine.

Flowers: Saguaro's white flowers, like stars in the night,
Reflect the bright moon with a radiant light.
These blooms become fruits, sweet, juicy and red.
Their juice brings rain magic, the People have said.

Saguaros: Tall cactus with arms bending and thin
Will swell up with water when sweet rains begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the rain washing over hard ground.

Clouds: The life-giving clouds, colossal and white,
Stop over far mountains, just out of sight.
Clouds swollen with rain that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling water for one and for all.

Headman: And now comes the headman who blesses the wine
And elders who guard it until the right time.
Then all of the People are gathered together
To sing sacred songs to encourage the weather.

Medicine Man: And catching the wind with the feathers he bound,
The medicine man makes circles around.
While the People hold hands and dance in a chain,
The singer's gourd rattle makes music like rain.

Grandparents: Grandfather's fire burns hot like the sun
And cooks the ripe fruits till the syrup is done.
Grandmother's basket is woven just so
To capture the seeds and let syrup flow.

Women: In soft morning light, the women arrive
To harvest the fruits we will need to survive.
In baskets of willow, woven so fine,
They carry the fruits that will make sacred wine.

Flowers: Saguaro's white flowers bloom by starlight.
Reflecting the moon, they enchant the warm night.
These blooms become fruits, sweet, juicy and red.
Their juice brings rain magic, the old stories said.

Saguaros: Tall cactus with arms reaching out long and thin
Will fatten with water when cloudbursts begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the rain washing over hard ground.

Clouds: The life-giving clouds, gigantic in height,
Spill over the mountains and darken daylight.
Clouds swollen with rain that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling water for one and for all.

Narrator: Then out of the east comes a streak of bright light --
It flashes and dashes, then slithers from sight.
The deep ravines echo with thundering claps,
And even old dogs wake up from their naps.

The air fills with moisture -- the earth smells alive.
Life springs from the rain -- the desert will thrive.
The washes are flowing to soften hard ground --
Swift, rushing water -- a mystical sound.

All: Thanks to the women, the headman, the wine,
 To the fruits that are harvested each summertime.
 The cactus, their flowers, sweet blessings abound.
 They all work together to sing the rain down.

 The life-giving clouds, enormous and white,
 Flowed over the mountains, a beautiful sight!
 The bountiful clouds let precious rain fall
 To bring cooling water -- for one and for all.