

New Mexico Quarterly

Volume 11 | Issue 3

Article 30

1941

Spectacle

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Recommended Citation

Byrne, J. Patrick. "Spectacle." *New Mexico Quarterly* 11, 3 (1941). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol11/iss3/30>

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SPECTACLE

Solomon dead, all lusting done,
 Past the clay that was David's son
 Came his concubines, one by one:
 Slender, plump; as a cedar tall
 Or high as my heart; demure in shawl
 Or bare-faced bold with ready eye—
 To rustle of silk they passed him by.
 The last was old, she had been fair,
 She touched the feet set neatly there.

Quiet the feet that between her own
 Had lain, the loins now cold as stone;
 Stilled the hands once prompt to show
 Builder where every beam must go;
 Singing tongue inert as lead,
 Empty of thought that high, domed head,
 He who was wisdom lying dead.

Between the dead and my stiff-held spear
 They passed, and stared on that gorgeous bier.

PROGRESS

The gracious trees drooped feathery limbs
 Along the quiet street;
 The leaves whispered tiny hymns
 In summer's rain and heat.

Came loud strange men with coils of wire
 And posts of foreign wood;
 The wind, each leaf in his choir,
 Tiptoe, listening, stood.

The strangers went their way; the breeze,
 Mourned, and the leaves mourned too:
 Holes had been hacked in all the trees
 To let the wire go through.

J. PATRICK BYRNE