

# New Mexico Quarterly

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Volume 22 | Issue 1

Article 12

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1952

## Old Man's Lament

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### Recommended Citation

Turkat, Judah M.. "Old Man's Lament." *New Mexico Quarterly* 22, 1 (1952). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol22/iss1/12>

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## DEPARTURE AND RETURN

In the room that walls the world nobody saw  
 His slow-stepped passage through the dark door,  
 On which habitually all backs are turned.  
 Nobody knew when he was there no more.  
 And indeed, to him it seemed stark perilous,  
 Seemed that he moved by inches, if at all;  
 But he did go, the distance being less  
 Than that divides the body from the soul.  
 And when he came again into that room,  
 Though no one asked to know where he had gone,  
 He was not to himself nor they to him  
 Still self-estranged, but one and one and one.

J. S. MOODEY

## OLD MAN'S LAMENT

Dark head behind the window curtain  
 Red shutters beneath a sloping roof  
 Speechless tiles, awkward turrets  
 Tonight you are the loose soil of my lifeless coast.  
 Tonight you engulf with darkness  
 The knotted tree trunks of my gloomy roads.  
 Tonight you turn in my mind without respite  
 And glow in my blood like heated coals.

O delicate-faced gypsy  
 Noble willow of my marshy roads  
 Forever standing immune and innocent  
 In the blue and white doorways of my thoughts.  
 Forever standing there.

How forthright is our uneasy silence  
Pure skinned the voice in our throats  
When I lift your face to mine  
And endow you with the bounty of my song.

What is it then we are awaiting  
Awake but bewildered by the indigo of our moss  
It is long since our words had any meaning  
Our flesh felt the cry and hue of touch  
It is long since you have come outdoors  
Walking intently across our broken roads.

JUDAH M. TURKAT

O R O U T D O O R S - I N (for William Goyen)

Behind the church *de los Santos de los Ultimos Días*  
rusts the old chassis of a Chrysler truck  
that slumps there massively  
its licenseplate ENCHANTMENT  
39. —Moments of simple oddness, now,  
occur lighting a cigarette  
wondering why the April afternoon  
seems suddenly quite blue and . . . still  
my eye upon the match. Terrific change  
of cloud. —Slowly  
the twilight stains the mountain  
with dark blood; the moon  
clears Taos Peak  
and casts its light upon the power-lines.  
I hear the harpstrung wires—they sing  
of tricky voices fused with space. The stars  
gleam down. Placita Tavern  
starts its wheel  
and blue smoke shows from all the chimney-stubs.

HOWARD GRIFFIN