

# New Mexico Quarterly

---

Volume 32 | Issue 3

Article 19

---

1962

## At Kiowa

William O. Heckman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq>

---

### Recommended Citation

Heckman, William O.. "At Kiowa." *New Mexico Quarterly* 32, 3 (1962). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol32/iss3/19>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by the University of New Mexico Press at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Quarterly* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

HELEN HARRINGTON

*THE SNAKE*

Adam knew him, sometimes called his name  
 melodiously upon the evening breeze  
 or in the dawning, and the serpent came,  
 walking upright, graceful, through the trees.

And Eve had heard his voice. Through bloom  
 of apple trees and pears it softly reared  
 promises enticing as perfume  
 before he sharply coiled and disappeared.

But he was always strange. . . . Later, they recalled  
 they looked for him behind when grasses stirred  
 and thought to leap away! Perfection palled  
 on him, they thought, and they referred  
 to him as devious—one who had long been fumbling  
 for word, or reason, to send Eden crumbling.

WILLIAM O. HECKMAN

*AT KIOWA*

The sun untarnished, minted new, we thought  
 Had just been flipped, sent arching up above  
 The patient sage. It seemed a coin that would  
 Be spent, but not too soon, in some strange way.

We let the heat heap up upon our backs  
 And all our eyes drank so much light we swore  
 That black was found no longer in their rings.

Untold, we let the beads of sweat go drown  
 In marshes on our arms. There hairs were reeds.

The phoenix soared and quite forgot to die.  
 Then I with spinning heart found us a rock  
 And struck it with my pen. In times there was  
 This babbling brook of words. We laughed. We heard.

I hope it chants forever, "Limbo's light!"