

# New Mexico Quarterly

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Volume 37 | Issue 1

Article 10

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1967

## The Playground

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### Recommended Citation

Legler, Philip. "The Playground." *New Mexico Quarterly* 37, 1 (1967). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol37/iss1/10>

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PHILIP LEGLER

*THE PLAYGROUND*

These autumn nights  
You'd think this was his home  
Or that he sits here, secret, being brave,  
And find him wating till the others leave  
The park in darkness, come  
To try on skates

And race and dare  
The cold wind to outwit  
An empty tennis court. Only the moon  
Can trip him up or catch him all alone  
Turning, jumping a net  
Of shadows there.

It seems a game  
He plays, a bet that says  
You're safe inside the lines, but more than once  
He skates into the shadows by the fence  
That hang there waiting, trees  
His eyes might name

By day, or climb.  
Sometimes he spins and falls  
To tumble in the night that does not care  
Whether he skins a knee or whimpers, sure  
Someone has heard his calls  
Like an old dream

That's lightly clad.  
Whistling, he glances back,  
Runs to the corner, out of breath at last,  
But leaves me in the shadows like the ghost  
Scaring him down the block  
And off to bed.