

## SACRED DATURA

### I.

Full moon rises,  
touches the twisted rags  
of datura blooms with cool, blue fingers.  
Tight twists relax,  
five bright ribs  
unfurl the flower like an umbrella,  
stretching luminous flower flesh  
into silver trumpets,  
prepared to play an opalescent nocturne.  
They have banked moonlight  
from previous nights and spent  
days composing night music.

The air is still.  
I press my nose deep  
into pearly desert horns.  
Night perfume, delicate—  
a more ancient lunar resurrection—  
pools deep among five stamens,  
ivory-feathered anthers  
and a single pistil,  
waiting.

A cool night breeze  
lifts a miasma of musk from the datura's throats,  
wafts an irresistible invitation.  
From purple shadows  
a sphinx moth—hovering fairy form—  
selects a milk-white mouth,  
probes deep with coiled tongue  
—passionate kisses—  
brushes pollen from some other lover  
onto the trembling pistil.

### II.

Early, before the sun's blazing eye  
slams down like a shovel  
on the desert, datura blooms  
still trumpet alluring aromas  
to all pollen brushers and nectar sippers.  
Ants and day-dipping moths

tiptoe on violet-tinged edges,  
honeybees mumble and fumble  
in alabaster throats, then burdened  
with pantaloons of pollen,  
grapple their way up swaying pistils,  
and a wee lime green spider,  
no bigger than parentheses,  
crouches, waving crabby claws,  
until I bump the flower and he plummets  
on an invisible thread.

As heat and light grow, shimmer,  
the flowers begin to wind shut,  
save their music for another night.

III.

After a day of heat and light,  
once again silver night magic—  
vegetable foreplay.  
Within this wrinkled rag,  
upon the stigma—  
at the tip of shuddering pistil—  
pollen grains thrust downward.  
Deep in sacred datura womb,  
tiny explosions of flower love—  
ovules are fertilized.  
Then long gestation  
of chestnut-brown oval seeds,  
cradled in a swelling ovary,  
a spiky sphere,  
first green, then brown,  
shaped like some medieval weapon.  
Armed at the clarion call.  
Ready to split summer open,  
or be split open.