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.