

SHADE OF THE SAGUARO

In the dream, a long saguaro cactus
is my only shade; I am almost hugging it
to hide from the hateful sun. I shake
the canteen -- one more day, if I am careful.
My bare feet are ragged mess, cut, bruised,
covered with dried blood and dirt, burned
by the sun. I could rip up my shirt
and bind the feet a little, maybe move
a little faster, but my back and chest will burn.
As the dream goes on, I remember a pair of shoes
I owned as a boy, how strong they were! How fine!
To put them on was like slipping into your bride,
love and service into a pair of soft leather containers.
"But this isn't a dream of those shoes," I think,
and I stand up quickly and move off east,
watching the horizon for signs of danger.

JAMES LEE JOBE

SEE WHAT WE DO FOR YOU?

Barefoot, as ordered, the people came
from far across the land, to the place
where the Fascist told them to go.

There a was a long queue that went
for many miles. The people looked poor.

Waiting for them at the end
was an axe-man, the Fascist,
a mountain of shoes,
and a very deep hole. One by one
the people stepped up and the axe-man
chopped off their feet, both of them.

The Fascist then placed each foot
into a shoe, and dropped these off
into the hole. "See what we give you?"

He sneered at them all.

"Before we came you had nothing."

JAMES LEE JOBE