

## Huachuca Mountains

Seven Cities of Cibola

Seven Cities of Gold

Estévan a black Moor slave

Coronado a Spanish conquistador

marching north they searched

Estévan killed by natives

Coronado defeated tired empty-handed

this northward quest continues

some fail some prevail

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Border Monument 102 Mexico at our back

a mountain trek sweat to Huachuca's crest

gold's not our prize Arizona adventure is

fire and ice blanket Miller Peak

surviving Douglas-fir white pine aspen

tickle a mountain high

a great white tethered guppy scans San Pedro Valley

and Huachuca Mountains for *evildoers*

black knapsacks bobbing in the night

from leeward slope an elegant trogon

barking hoarse love calls

black-headed grosbeak bathes in a shallow pool

sporting dandelion horsetail maple

rufous-sided towhees flit about the hillside bush

a western tanager perches on a piney bough

all red yellow and black

red-shafted flickers listen for bugs

climbing down Thunder Mountain's  
cliffy snow-patched switchbacks  
we join a Sunnyside Canyon old miners' doubletrack  
cathedral-like sycamores oaks pines  
stand tall welcome spirited souls

two forest monarchs straddle Scotia Canyon's path  
a beauty and a beast  
a silky-skinned and silvered sycamore  
festooned with leaves  
red yellow green orange  
twinkling autumn light  
fire scarred and tortured juniper branches  
rotted heartwood's eleventh hour  
portends adventure misadventure

*The Arizona Trail: Passages in Poetry*

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Published by Wheatmark®  
2030 East Speedway Boulevard, Suite 106  
Tucson, Arizona 85719 USA  
[www.wheatmark.com](http://www.wheatmark.com)

ISBN: 978-1-62787-561-5

LCCN: 2017958752