

Nancy Haskett

Flight QZ8501

Perhaps the jet left a vapor trail signature
in the sky,
filled with content passengers,
talking, reading, sleeping,
nothing to see below but water
on the flight to Singapore,
until the advent of the storm,
deceitful spurious clouds
with evil strength to become
the Arbiter of Life and Death,
clouds that grew icy tentacles,
grabbed the airliner and tossed it,
turned it into a graceful swan,
falling headfirst
into an ocean

Road Trip, 1958

I spent hours that first day
looking at desert landscape,
cacti, sagebrush and distant mountains
that never seemed to change.
At some point, my father said we were leaving Arizona,
entering New Mexico, and I looked up expectantly,
ready to see a long black line, a clear-cut division
between the states;
instead, I saw a sign, "Leaving Arizona"
followed almost immediately by a second sign,
"Welcome to New Mexico. "
Just that. No other distinct demarcation,
nothing to show this state ended, the next state began,
no change in the scenery along Route 66,
simply an invisible border
between this mesquite tree and the one four feet away,
a pattern repeated daily as we headed east
into Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri,
and I gradually began to realize that this country
didn't look like the U.S. map in my fourth grade classroom,
with multi-colored states drawn into rectangles,
squares, or odd shapes whose sides
fit together perfectly in a jigsaw puzzle;
the land transformed naturally,
blended from desert into fields of corn and beans,
to mountains and cities,
where margins and boundaries
didn't actually exist anywhere except on paper,
or perhaps in the minds of the surveyors, ranchers and farmers
who walked the ground everyday –
and in a sense, the land was unchanged,
had looked much like this for hundreds, even thousands of years –

borderless, it seemed to stretch forever

An educator for over 30 years, **Nancy Haskett** retired in 2011 and is an active member of the poetry community in Modesto, CA. She is a member of the Ina Coolbrith Circle, MoSt (Modesto Stanislaus Poetry Center), National League of American Penwomen and other local writing groups. Nancy has presented her poetry at the Carnegie Arts Center in Turlock, CA and has been published in many places, including the anthology *More than Soil, More than Sky*; Stanislaus *Connections*; *Penumbra*; *Homestead Review*; *Iodine Press*; *Song of the San Joaquin*; *Medusa's Kitchen website*; *The Pen Woman*, and more. In her spare time, Nancy enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with her family.