

Karl C. Sandberg

SABBATH

No, nothing will do just now
but to sit beneath a mesquite tree
in a dry creek bed and look long at cactus.
The saguaro does not sway or bend or mark the breeze.
It has no use. It simply is.
I can look at it until time is lost
and it will not move.

No, I will not leave just now.
Here the bow is not cracked.
Here nothing is drawn taut.
I must get away from every place
where people have sold soap and automobiles
and have drawn themselves taut.

No one has seen a cactus move.
Even its birth did not part the womb of stillness.
I will intrude upon its world of being.
I will sit on earth prepared by long dying
and wonder what people mean when they say,
"What time is it?"

The air about saguaro is unmarred
by talk of "duty," or "responsibility," or "obligation."
The saguaro is God's servant.
It keeps the ancient law of the Sabbath:
"On this day thou shalt do no work,
neither anything respectable,
all day long."