

Jim Reeves

"Shifting Whispering Sands"

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I discovered the valley of the shifting whispering sands
While prospecting for gold in one of our western states
I saw the silent windmills the crumbling water tanks
The bones of cattle and burroughs picked clean by
buzzards
Bleached by the desert sun
I stumbled over a crumbling buckboard nearly covered
by the sands
And stopping to rest I heard a tinkling whispering
sound
And suddenly realised that even though the wind was
quiet the sand did not lie still
I seemed to be surrounded by a mystery so heavy and
oppressive
I could scarcely breath
For days and weeks I wandered aimlessly in this valley
Seeking answers to the many questions that raced
through my fevered mind
Where was everyone why the white bones the dry wells
The barren valley where people must have lived and
died
Finally I could go no farther my food and water gone
I sat down and buried my face in my hands and resting
thus
I learnt the secret of the shifting whispering sands
How I escaped from the valley I do not know
But now to pay my final debt for being spared
I must tell you what I learned out there on the desert so
many years ago
(When the day is oddly quiet and the breeze seems not
to blow
One would think the sand was resting but you'll find
this is not so
It is whisp'ring softly whisp'ring as it slowly moves
along
And for those who stop and listen it will sing this
mournful song
Of sidewinders and the horntoes of the Thorny
Chaparral
In the sunny days and moonlight nights the coyote's
lonely yell
How the stars seem you could touch them as you lay

and gaze on high
At the Heavens where we're hoping we'll be going when
we die)
Yes it always whispers to me of the days of long ago
When the settlers and the miners fought the crafty
Navaho
How the cattle roamed the valley happy people worked
the land
And now everything is covered by the shifting
whispering sands
How the miner left his buckboard went to work his claim
that day
And the burroughs broke their halters when they
thought he'd gone to stay
Wandered far in search of water on to Old Sidewinder's
Well
And there their bones picked clean by buzzards that
were circling when they fell
(How they found the aged miner lying dead upon the
sand
After months they could but wonder if he died by
human hand
So they dug his grave and laid him on his back and
crossed his hands
And his secret still is hidden by the shifting whispering
sands)
This is what they whispered to me on the quiet desert
air
Of the people, and the cattle and the miner lying there
If you want to learn their secret wander through this
quiet land
And I'm sure you'll hear the story of the shifting,
whispering sands
(Of the shifting whispering sands)

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