

Life Without End

I once flowed for the Hohokam
until drought forced my dormancy.
I rose again for the Diné
who named me, *Life Without End*.

Conquistadors arrived and called me,
the *Colorado*,
It was then water wars began
between men determined to draw my last drop
before I could reach the delta.

I am the salty sister, a wily woman
who wooed thirsty immigrants
on their westward hegira
across coral colored crags
and amber swirls of ancient sands.
Mules packed maize seeds.
Migrants carved hope into plow handles.

Men came for my swollen channels,
as the promise of fertile land
lay parched on dry lips of reality;
Days too hot for snakes,
Nights too cold for the dead.

I seduced with placid runs
then trapped their dinghies
in the channels of white capped rapids
beating hope against the walls of Flaming Gorge.
Yet,
 they
 kept
 coming.

Only the one armed man named Powell
loved me enough to slow their desire
to trap and tame this red woman
with the power to sow crops in the desert.

His failure was my chagrin,
but do not mourn my lost virtue,
I am a patient prisoner
locked in this reservoir
my history secured in the sediment
piling behind this dam wall.

Drought will return as my savior,
and when I fall to dead pool
these dam walls will tumble.

I'll spill mud, you'll plow salt.