

APRIL IS

# NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

## SLEEP IN THE MOJAVE DESERT

Out here there are no hearthstones,  
Hot grains, simply. It is dry, dry.  
And the air dangerous. Noonday acts queerly  
On the mind's eye erecting a line  
Of poplars in the middle distance, the only  
Object beside the mad, straight road  
One can remember men and houses by.  
A cool wind should inhabit these leaves  
And a dew collect on them, dearer than money,  
In the blue hour before sunup.  
Yet they recede, untouchable as tomorrow,  
Or those glittery fictions of spilt water  
That glide ahead of the very thirsty.

I think of the lizards airing their tongues  
In the crevice of an extremely small shadow  
And the toad guarding his heart's droplet.  
The desert is white as a blind man's eye,  
Comfortless as salt. Snake and bird  
Doze behind the old maskss of fury.  
We swelter like firedogs in the wind.  
The sun puts its cinder out. Where we lie  
The heat-cracked crickets congregate  
In their black armorplate and cry.  
The day-moon lights up like a sorry mother,  
And the crickets come creeping into our hair  
To fiddle the short night away.

*Sylvia Plath*