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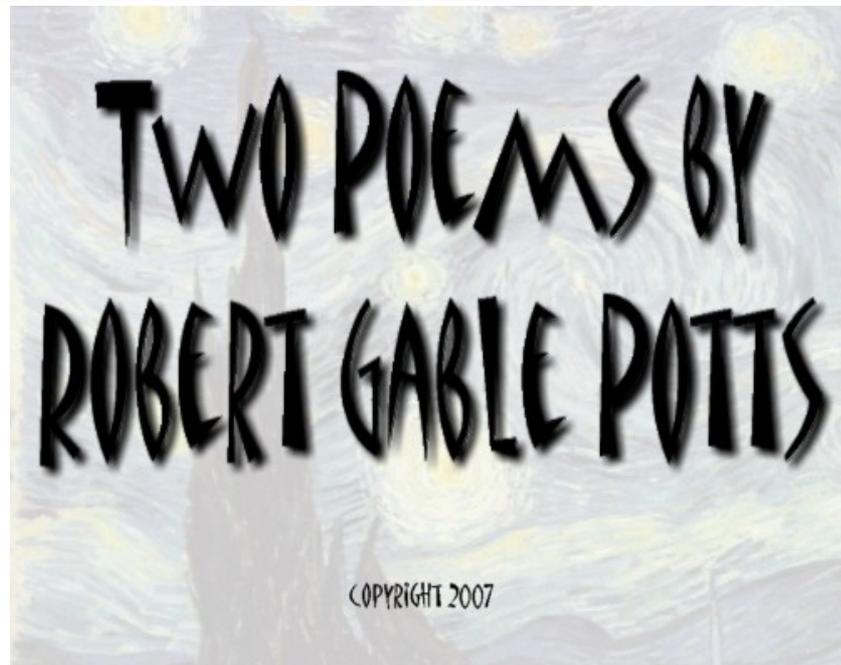
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## Trilobite Lore

Brown-limbed children,  
their bare feet callused  
against the sunblasted rock,  
walk across desert  
with the bent spines  
of old Berber quarriers,  
stopping only to poke  
at the limestone matrix  
with fingers hardened  
to bony chisels. They search

till dusk for trilobites,  
fossilized trojans  
of a long unsunned race,  
dug from the basement  
of an evaporated sea  
to spend their afterlife  
in Moroccan markets beside  
spices and bolts of cloth,  
and earn a few dirham  
from curious foreigners.

A black cinder cone  
looms over a Mojave  
carpet of sage and creosote,  
a silhouette already ancient  
when the first humans  
scrambled over its slope  
in yucca sandals. A hunter

of peccary or bighorn  
sheep was the first to spot  
a broken sheet of red shale,  
half-buried in the loose lava,  
embossed with the petrified eye  
of a god. A gift to guide  
the hunter out of the dark.

## Tule Lake Segregation Center, 1946

Windblown dust cakes  
every sill, invades  
through cracks around closed  
doors, erases chalk lines,  
screens the Sherman tanks  
and armored car patrols  
from view, but not from memory.

Gaunt-faced children  
scratch their kanji names  
in rain-packed earth  
with sticks. Nothing grows in the shadow  
of watchtowers and heavy-wire  
mesh but the bitter  
weeds used to weave baskets.

Rows of tarpapered barracks  
cross the dry lakebed  
like giant brushstrokes  
raised from the white quartz,  
burnished to a smooth jade.

Oversized windows swing open  
like gunports or shut  
against the groans of protest,  
riot growling in the thin  
smoke-laced air.

Some walls are hidden  
under a canopy of olive drab  
vines with heart-shaped  
leaves like faces, worn-down  
to blank bone; eyes dead  
to the sky, mouths filled with sand.

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**Robert Gable Potts** graduated in June 2005 from California State University, San Bernardino with a B.A. in English, and is a member of honor societies Sigma Tau Delta and Golden Key International. Potts is currently enrolled in the M.F.A. creative writing program at University of California, Riverside's Palm Desert campus. Two of his poems, "Blue" and "Sweet," were published in *Solstice*, College of the Desert's literary journal.