

SING DOWN THE JU:kĩ

Original poem written by Judi Moreillon
O'odham Words by Regina Siquieros and Angie Saraficio

- Narrator A dusty land bakes. Its *a'akĩ* run dry.
The blazing hot sun hovers high in the sky.
Cicadas make music, a sharp scraping sound.
The spreading mesquite trees hang close to the ground.
- This spiny land's home to rattlers and quails
And shy little rabbits with soft cotton tails,
Coyotes who howl and sing to the moon,
And mourning doves cooing their sorrowful tune.
- Tortoises plod with their homes on their backs,
And the sand records time with animal tracks.
When the sun is white hot, in May and in June;
This dry land is waiting - *ju:kĩ* will come soon.
- In this desert land live the *O'odham* who know
How to sing down the *ju:kĩ* that makes the crops grow.
A sacred tradition, the elders explain
How wind brings the *cewagĩ* and *cewagĩ* bring the *ju:kĩ*.
- Cewagĩ* Life-giving *cewagĩ*, overflowing with light,
Will wait for the wind to send them in flight.
They swell up with *ju:kĩ* that's waiting to fall
To bring cooling *su:dagĩ* for one and for all.
- Ha:sañ* Tall *ha:sañ* with arms curving graceful and thin
Will reach out for *su:dagĩ* when cool rains begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the *ju:kĩ* washing over hard ground.
- Cewagĩ* The life-giving *cewagĩ*, full of moisture and light,
Form over far *do:da'ag*, still out of sight.
Cewagĩ swollen with *ju:kĩ* that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling *su:dagĩ* for one and for all.

- Hihosig* *Ha:sañ* white *hihosig* will bloom by starlight.
Reflecting the moon, they will brighten the night.
These blooms become *bahidaj*, sweet, juicy and red.
Their juice brings *ju:kĩ* magic, the old stories said.
- Ha:sañ* Tall *ha:sañ* with arms bending and thin
Will swell up with *su:dagĩ* when sweet rains begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the *ju:kĩ* washing over hard ground.
- Cewagĩ* The life-giving *cewagĩ*, reflecting sunlight,
Float over far *do:da'ag*, still out of sight.
Cewagĩ swollen with *ju:kĩ* that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling *su:dagĩ* for one and for all.
- U'uwĩ* In morning's soft light, the *u'uwĩ* arrive
To pick the ripe *bahidaj* we need to survive.
In *huha* of willow, woven so fine,
They carry the *bahidaj* that make sacred wine.
- Hihosig* *Ha:sañ* white *hihosig*, brilliant and bright,
Reflecting the moon, are like stars in the night.
These blooms become *bahidaj*, sweet, juicy and red.
Their juice brings *ju:kĩ* magic, our grandparents said.
- Ha:sañ* Tall *ha:sañ* with arms reaching out long and thin
Will fatten with *su:dagĩ* when cloudbursts begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the *ju:kĩ* washing over hard ground.
- Cewagĩ* The life-giving *cewagĩ*, so massive and white,
Drift over far *do:da'ag*, still out of sight.
Cewagĩ swollen with *ju:kĩ* that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling *su:dagĩ* for one and for all.

Grandparents	<p>Grandfather's fire burns hot like the sun And cooks the ripe <i>bahidaj</i> till the <i>sitol</i> is done. Grandmother's <i>hua</i> is woven just so To capture the seeds and let <i>sitol</i> flow.</p>
<i>U'uwĩ</i>	<p>In soft morning light, the <i>u'uwĩ</i> arrive To harvest the <i>bahidaj</i> we need to survive. In <i>huha</i> of willow, woven so fine, They carry the <i>bahidaj</i> that make sacred wine.</p>
<i>Hihosig</i>	<p><i>Hašaň</i> white <i>hihosig</i> will bloom by starlight. Reflecting the moon, they shine in the night. These blooms become <i>bahidaj</i>, sweet, juicy and red. Their juice brings <i>ju:kĩ</i> magic, the elders have said.</p>
<i>Ha:šaň</i>	<p>Tall <i>ha:šaň</i> with arms curving graceful and thin Will reach out for <i>šu:dagĩ</i> when cool rains begin. With roots that are shallow and spread all around, They will soak up the <i>ju:kĩ</i> washing over hard ground.</p>
<i>Cewagĩ</i>	<p>The life-giving <i>cewagĩ</i>, tremendous and white, Build over far <i>do:da'ag</i>, still out of sight. <i>Cewagĩ</i> swollen with <i>ju:kĩ</i> that's waiting to fall Will bring cooling <i>šu:dagĩ</i> for one and for all.</p>
<i>Makai</i>	<p>Then catching the wind with the feathers he bound, The <i>makai</i> prays and makes circles around. While the <i>O'odham</i> hold hands and dance in a chain, The singer's <i>šawkuđ</i> makes music like <i>ju:kĩ</i>.</p>
Grandparents	<p>Grandfather's fire burns hot like the sun. It cooks the ripe <i>bahidaj</i> till the <i>sitol</i> is done. Grandmother's <i>hua</i> is woven just so To capture the seeds and let <i>sitol</i> flow.</p>

- U'uwĩ* In morning's soft light, the *u'uwĩ* arrive
To pick the ripe *bahidaj* we need to survive.
In *huha* of willow, woven so fine,
They carry the *bahidaj* that make sacred wine.
- Hihosig* *Ha:sañ* white *hihosig*, like stars in the night,
Reflect the bright moon with a radiant light.
These blooms become *bahidaj*, sweet, juicy and red.
Their juice brings *ju:kĩ* magic, the *O'odham* have said.
- Ha:sañ* Tall *ha:sañ* with arms bending and thin
Will swell up with *su:dagĩ* when sweet rains begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the *ju:kĩ* washing over hard ground.
- Cewagĩ* The life-giving *cewagĩ*, colossal and white,
Stop over far *do:da'ag*, just out of sight.
Cewagĩ swollen with *ju:kĩ* that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling *su:dagĩ* for one and for all.
- Headman And now comes the headman who blesses the wine
And elders who guard it until the right time.
Then all of the *O'odham* are gathered together
To sing sacred songs to encourage the weather.
- Makai* And catching the wind with the feathers he bound,
The *makai* prays and makes circles around.
While the *O'odham* hold hands and dance in a chain,
The singer's *sawkuđ* makes music like *ju:kĩ*.
- Grandparents Grandfather's fire burns hot like the sun
And cooks the ripe *bahidaj* till the *sitol* is done.
Grandmother's *hua* is woven just so
To capture the seeds and let *sitol* flow.

- U'uwĩ* In soft morning light, the *u'uwĩ* arrive
To harvest the *bahidaj* we need to survive.
In *huha* of willow, woven so fine,
They carry the *bahidaj* that make sacred wine.
- Hihosig* *Ha:sañ* white *hihosig* bloom by starlight.
Reflecting the moon, they enchant the warm night.
These blooms become *bahidaj*, sweet, juicy and red.
Their juice brings *ju:kĩ* magic, the old stories said.
- Ha:sañ* Tall *ha:sañ* with arms reaching out long and thin
Will fatten with *su:dagĩ* when cloudbursts begin.
With roots that are shallow and spread all around,
They will soak up the *ju:kĩ* washing over hard ground.
- Cewagĩ* The life-giving *cewagĩ*, gigantic in height,
Spill over the *do:da'ag* and darken daylight.
Cewagĩ swollen with *ju:kĩ* that's waiting to fall
Will bring cooling *su:dagĩ* for one and for all.
- Narrator Then out of the east comes a streak of bright light --
It flashes and dashes, then slithers from sight.
The deep ravines echo with thundering claps,
And even old dogs wake up from their naps.
- The air fills with moisture -- the earth smells alive.
Life springs from the *ju:kĩ* -- the desert will thrive.
The *a'akĩ* are flowing to soften hard ground --
Swift, rushing *su:dagĩ* -- a mystical sound.
- All: Thanks to the *u'uwĩ*, the headman, the wine,
To the *bahidaj* harvested each summertime.
The *ha:sañ*, their *hihosig*, sweet blessings abound.
They all work together to sing the *ju:kĩ* down.
- The life-giving *cewagĩ*, enormous and white,
Flowed over the *do:da'ag*, a beautiful sight!
The bountiful *cewagĩ* let precious *ju:kĩ* fall
To bring cooling *su:dagĩ* -- for one and for all.