

# TURTLE POETRY

*Editorial Introduction.* — This section is devoted to poetry involving turtles, representing either reprinted previously published or new unpublished material. We encourage our readers to submit poetry or songs for consideration, either their own material or work by other authors. Poems may be submitted to Anders G.J. Rhodin at Chelonian Research Foundation [RhodinCRF@aol.com].

Our desire is to share with our readers the beauty and wonder of turtles as expressed through the art of the poem or song. In the sense that the relationship between man and turtles is multifaceted, so too is turtle poetry. The poems we publish here will reflect that complexity, from poems of pure admiration for the creatures themselves to others reflecting the utilization of turtles and their products. Some poems will reflect man's use of the turtle for sustenance, others will stress man's need to preserve and protect turtles. Some will deal with our emotional interactions with turtles, others will treat turtles light-heartedly or with seeming disrespect, but all will hopefully help us to better understand both the human and the chelonian condition, and remind us that the turtle holds a sacred place in all our hearts.

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## Agua de Beber

TAYLOR EDWARDS<sup>1</sup>

The musical score is written for voice and guitar. The voice part has lyrics: "Sol-i-tar-y", "tor-toise", "he is con-tent", "a-lone", "a-mong the snakes and liz-ards", "he calls the des-ert", "home". The guitar part includes chords like Am and F, and a section labeled "(Transition to Chorus)".

Solitary tortoise  
he is content alone  
Among the snakes and lizards  
he calls the desert home

Then she arrived  
a beautiful monsoon  
And now this barren desert  
is starting to bloom

Her graceful shower  
her warm, gentle drops  
Awaken the tortoise  
and saturate his thoughts

He wasn't even thirsty  
until she touched his lips  
And now he is longing  
for another sip

*Chorus:*  
*Agua de beber, agua de beber*  
*agua de beber, agua de beber*  
*Agua de beber*

The tortoise searches for her  
and finds a tranquil pool  
And the still water  
reflects his heart is full

Ripples on her surface  
destroy tranquility  
The tortoise is frightened  
she will soon no longer be

This ephemeral pond  
with whom he wants to stay  
Has quenched his thirst  
but evaporates away

Dry desert soils  
long for summer rain  
The tortoise heart desires  
to see her once again  
*Agua de beber, agua de beber*  
*agua de beber, agua de beber*  
*Agua de beber*  
*and he'll aestivate without her*

*Editorial Comment.* — This song about a desert tortoise was written and composed by Taylor Edwards, inspired by a classic by Antonio Carlos Jobim. *Agua de Beber* translates to “water to drink”, and, in Brazil, it is a phrase that refers to a source of knowledge or understanding. I thought it particularly poignant that we publish this song/poem in the same issue in which the same author has also applied his professional scientific interests to an analysis of genetic phylogeography of the desert tortoise (Murphy, Berry, Edwards, and McLuckie, this volume). Each of us, no matter how professionally involved with turtles, also harbors a passion for these animals on which we work—sharing that passion through the expression of poetry or song makes each of us somehow more human and emphasizes our commitment to their conservation. I salute and celebrate all who give expression to this humanity.

<sup>1</sup> Submitted by Taylor Edwards September 2007