



San Antonio Oxbow,  
Albuquerque, NM

# Reeds in Mud

The fifth element, mud,  
Stopped Coronado's cavalry, made  
Bowmen stagger, sank  
The wagon wheels.  
Farewell, cannon,  
Oblivious to command,  
Impossible to dig out, and  
Gone, the men struck down,  
And gone, too, the map that showed  
A clear path, where  
Swamp set this soft ambush.

Americans knew the risk,  
Where our Rio Grande was eating away  
The sand dune, collapsing  
The bluff, and threatening  
The road called Namaste,  
Under the College of St Joseph

So property spoke up,  
And engineers dug and dredged,  
Deleted islands, sand bars,  
And some random meanders,  
Nudging the river east,  
Away from real estate.

The army corps turned this sudden curve into  
An afterthought, made the high bluff  
Safe for parks, streets, and a thousand homes.

Below, half soil, half swamp, this wet land  
Soaks up rain runoff, flash flood,  
And river's overflow,  
Sprouts tall grass, feeds willows,  
And forms lagoons for flocks, and fish.

Knee deep, like a crane, I sing  
This intricate hive, this maze,  
This uncertain mud.



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