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Siyóname skies

There are so many words for this kind of blue —azure, cerulean, lazuli homespun clouds in turn go fuchsia above afternoon- yellow washed cliffs —it's green-blue here: *siyónami*, what linguists with little charm call 'grue'—

Two boys come to get their crookneck squashes and run away again through dew-soaked grasses

Mosquitoes find my fingers as I write.

In the sky, twilit bat calligraphy and on the ground, almost too much lightning bug beauty.

Rain-dusk clouds creep like creatures of the sea through crevices in the southern cliffs, crawl down the hillside where I wait, where girls with babies tied on their backs roll truck tires through puddles on the basketball court.

The Rarámuri word siyóname [see-**yoe**-na-may] has appeared in linguistic notes for decades as an example of lexical lumping of what English speakers distinguish as green and blue.¹ This piece was written during ethnoecological fieldwork in a Rarámuri community in the Sierra Tarahumara of Northern Mexico.

¹ Burgess, D., W. Kempton, and R.E. MacLaury. 1985. Tarahumara Color Modifiers: Individual Variation and Evolutionary Change. In *Directions in Cognitive Anthropology*, J.W.D. Dougherty, ed. pp.49-72. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.