**On Top of Heuweltjie**

(Sung to tune of the American folk song “On Top of Old Smokey”)

On top of heuweltjie

all covered with frass,

I came up with a theory

that made everyone laugh.

I said it’s quite simple,

it blows in the wind,

and as the dust settles

so the process begins.

The termites do help out

with things ‘long the way -

peculiar behaviors

as they store up their hay.

They harvest the plant life

from all around,

enriching their home sites

and compositing their mound.

The plants how they grow tall

in this fertile earth,

then trap dust that wind blows,

giving the mound great girth.

Along came an aardvark

with claws long and stout,

so hungry for termites,

he dug them all out.

But when the next rains came

alates filled the air,

and found the mound waiting

for a conjugal pair.

One day the professor

Had nothing better to do

So he wrote a long thesis

‘bout how heuweltjies grew.

*Joe McAuliffe, Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix, Arizona USA, October 2016*