

drift

a surreptitious sideways movement

barely perceptible

until a change in the horizon a landscape newly arrived from nowhere

Sand dislocated

into concrete walls and floors of buildings, into glass of screens and windows, into asphalt and roads—what dreams are made of (or so the tale was told).

The evolution of image infrastructures—from photographic glass plates in the 19th century, to photographic film in the 20th century, to the current dominance of digital images and screen-based culture and the possibility to encode great depositories of data in 5d glass—forms a circle, starting and closing with sand; as dream, as image, as data, as dust.

Each dune contains the seas and mountains of the past, ground down into more manageable informational units. The desert is a vast data storage, a library of encoded images, an archive of fossilised visions.

When the sand first arrived it felt like amnesia, blowing through our dwellings like the great forgetting. Each grain obscured the sun, delayed the morning. We slept longer, woke up disoriented, fell out of step with time.

Slowly, it built up inside our homes. Each morning the sand had to be swept from the folds of the tent like sleep rubbed from our eyes upon waking. It found its way into our clothes and bedding, settled like slopes of sugar at the bottom of our cups.

Before long, we knew our lives were being swallowed.

Every day the desert crept closer, hiding the hills, the well, the goats.
Dissolving their boundaries whenever it pleased.

The loss of vision was greater than night, the sand took our memories, erased everything we had known to be true. But the dreams it brought were vivid, pried loose from graves and temples, from prehistoric oceans now alive once more in the depths of our minds.

Only an archaeologist, a thousand years later, could see that we were still dreaming.

By that time, the world had been ground into pixels, mined, extracted, consumed, thrown away.

Our lives documented only in left overs: rubber tires, wires, textiles.

A hilly topography
seen from far far away

several thousand burial structures
circular and square
made of sandstone blocks
entwined by water's transient being, named 'wadi'.

There
a pullover was left to gradually sink
over the course of two decennia
into its chosen bed of sand.
Disappearing into where no light could register its fade
until only a tiny bit of its knitted condition remained visible.
Polyester crunch
at the surface of an ancient burial site
Rujum Sa'sa'

A drone promised a view from above
a phone asked for transmission from below
in this noon of amazing discoveries
glistening light enveloping us who came from rapidly growing cities
hoping to learn about an ancient landscape shaped by tombs over four thousand years
old.
There was nothing to be seen on screen
hidden in plain sight
light versus light
inner heat and radiation.

Sand as spheres
powdery, shapeshifting
never reliable
may contain
CI 16035 (Red 40 Lake)
CI 19140 (Yellow 5 Lake)
iron oxides
VP/hexadecene copolymer.
A smile, a laugh, a blush

In the middle of a place of intersecting timelines
fugitive cultural layers
folding into each other.
The value of each incomprehensible to the other
now intertwined
in eternity

Six hundred years to come of plastic bottles
an accumulating necropolis
facing the rising sun

even after
the last person
has stopped looking.

And the sand continues to escape from the images it has made
continuing to drift building other landscapes elsewhere.

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