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Little Sahara

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LITTLE SAHARA

Mark Sanders

The sun's light pierces the black panes
of the chrome and glass mountain, flooding the office.
It swims in the rivers of ink that slip and course
among the pyramids of daily ledgers and invoices,
warms its yellow coils on the margins of papers,
basks there, then slithers over the mail trays.

The little egyptian at his grey desk, at his grey task,
praying to the single eye of the Sphinx on the wall,
carves for his Pharaoh his red and black hieroglyphy,
a holy work, a woeful work of Ages.

But the egyptian presses to his broad and pale forehead
a troubled hand. Locked in his mind's eye
is a vision of an oasis, of square islands and gardens
of trees and of fruit sweet to the parched tongue.
There, his children dance in the fountain's mist
and rainbow, the sprinkler's folding and unfolding arch.
The sacrificed calf cooks on a black grid
over red, hissing coals; the cold tea
of the sun sweats Niles down the sides of his glass.

A phone rings and wakes him. A new epidemic,
a new burden and plague commences. The dream
dissipates like a mirage. The desk is a vast desert.
Like a nomad, he plods through eternal sands,
endless dunes of triplicate forms and letterheads.
Motes ascend the sun's bright bridge
and vanish into heaven's black, opaque glass.
Winds rise; the sand pelts the nomad's back.
He must keep moving or be lost, forever.