

Fragment of Desert Storm

Darkest desert torn layer by layer by wind
Willing to take it all; winding dune-tops disappearing
Into cold night desert storms.

“I wish I never would’ve read any books,”
A coworker said. “The war would be easier.”
He looked at me expecting something.

His shirt white as bleach,
Like an eyeball’s hidden hemisphere
Reflecting sunrise at the hotel in Kuwait.

And I saw, for a moment,
The goats on the white hills
Where the old Kurd stayed.

I thought of more than that,
That he was now no longer there,
Nor any place our feeble minds have mapped.

I thought of *more* still,
That the sun’s heat would punish
Us all at the end of time.

The goats waded through sand
Every waking moment searching
For water or food or rest.

He asked if I was alright.

But I knew there was a day

The old Kurd, or maybe just his goat.

He told me he knew how I was feeling.

He sat with me as my mind, impotent,

Clung to harsh images and dust storms,

He stood from his chair and picked up a Bible,

And soon after began to read from Revelation.

He told me where St John had been, what had been done to him

And I wondered what Patmos was like.

I wondered how far it was from King Fahd International airport,

How far from his home, his lord.

Matter of fact, I stopped listening to him halfway through.

He stood there, humble, kind, a good man,

But I wondered how far I could really be.

When will my revelation come?

O Lord, I prayed,

When will my revelation come?