

時計中的沙

凌風 譯

一把紅色的沙，來自
阿拉伯荒漠高溫，
盛在玻璃裡成為時間的偵探，
思索的使臣。

經過多少個厭倦的世紀
在這些沙漠上吹積！
見過多少的變遷奇異，
有多少史蹟能認記！

也許以實瑪利商旅的駱駝
踏著這裡經過，
帶著老人家膝前的愛子
進入埃及的土地。

也許摩西赤著的雙腳，
踐踏著沙地炙傷，
也許法老飛速的車輪，
馳過時使沙飛揚；

也許馬利亞，把拿撒勒的基督
緊抱在她的懷裡，
其盼望，愛，和信心的旅途
啟明這曠漠野地；

也許在隱基底棕樹下的隱者
漫步在死海的沙灘，
以低微的語聲，
慢誦古老亞美利亞的詩篇；

也許西行的車隊
離開波斯拉的城門；
也許往麥加的朝聖者堅信命運，

懷著決意的內心！

這些經過了，或許曾經過！
現在沙在水晶塔裡面，
最後被奇異的手監禁，
計數旅過的時間，

當為注視，這些狹窄的牆擴展；—
在我夢幻的眼前
流沙和沙漠一同擴展，
它無止無限的天。

持續的爆炸使它向上
這細小的金線
膨脹成為高大的巨柱，
看來叫人敬畏恐懼。

向上，越過下落的太陽，
越過無垠的平原，
那巨柱和它更廣的陰影伸展，
直到思想無法追趕。

景象消失了！牆壁仍然
隔絕火紅的夕陽，
隔絕那炎熱，無邊的平原，
半小時的沙已完！

Sand of the Desert in an Hour-Glass

A handful of red sand, from the hot clime
Of Arab desert brought,
Within this glass becomes the spy of Time,
The minister of Thought.

How many weary centuries has it been
About those deserts blown!
How many strange vicissitudes has seen,
How many histories known!

Perhaps the camels of the Ishmaelite
Trampled and passed it o'er,
When into Egypt from the patriarch's sight
His favorite son they bore.

Perhaps the feet of Moses, burnt and bare,
Crushed it beneath their tread,
Or Pharaoh's flashing wheels into the air
Scattered it as they sped;

Or Mary, with the Christ of Nazareth
Held close in her caress,
Whose pilgrimage of hope and love and faith
Illumed the wildness;

Or anchorites beneath Engaddi's palms
Pacing the Dead Sea beach,
And singing slow their old Armenian psalms
In half-articulate speech;

Or caravans, that from Bassora's gate
With westward steps depart;
Or Mecca's pilgrims, confident of Fate,
And resolute in heart!

These have passed over it, or may have passed!
Now in this crystal tower
Imprisoned by some curious hand at last,

It counts the passing hour.

And as I gaze, these narrow walls expand;—
Before my dreamy eye
Stretches the desert with its shifting sand,
Its unimpeded sky.

And borne aloft by the sustaining blast,
This little golden thread
Dilates into a column high and vast,
A form of fear and dread.

And onward, and across the setting sun,
Across the boundless plain,
The column and its broader shadow run,
Till thought pursues in vain.

The vision vanishes! These walls again
Shut out the lurid sun,
Shut out the hot, immeasurable plain;
The half-hour's sand is run!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow(1807-1882)

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