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Deployment

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Amber Adams

Deployment

They tell you of the sun-wave and moon dust,
but what they do not mention is the loneliness—
counting days, haunted by thoughts of home.
They do not tell you how much you forget,
a kind forgetting, so you can skip like a stone over

the surface of the earth through Toronto,
Shannon, Heidelberg, Turkey, and Kuwait,
each place blurring into a sleepless night.
Narrow revolutions, anniversaries, burrowed
days of drowsy numbness waiting

for your letters, which stopped coming
before I left the States. Anything that could not
hold in the salt-heat shamal of the desert devolved
[the girl who I was]

to become the flat-bellied lizard
of the landscape, muted brown and gray, shedding
the skins of previous selves in spined exoskeletons.

There was no return—only survival.
I did not let go of your dog tag, the letters,
your name. I left the desert, which means to leave itself.