

Winter Scene in the Desert of Gansu

The Old Silk Road is sparse
After the frozen Yellow River
Pierces the heart of Gansu
In Chinese Turkestan on my
Way to the caves of Dunhuang.
The yellow desert now turned
White in the snow that ripples
The ribs of trodden paths the hill
After undulating hill of crystal lit
Up by traces of the dying sun.
Not a shadow of bone nor flesh
Here in this neck of nothing where
Once dreams inflamed of
Fortunes and faiths and tongues
Exchanged for silver and silk.
There are only the cloudiest clicks
Of nine or ten Nikons that rush
From cave to cave their bearers
Unsmiling in the cold their
Delicate lips tourniqueted in
Bloomsbury scarves.
Only the bootsteps of Pradas
And Armanis follow them like
Ghosts in the slush.

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