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The White Road

By MANLY WADE WELLMAN

The desert is dun at the noon of day
And sable at noon of night ;
At dawn and at dusk it is silver-gray,
But the caravan route is white.

*Across the sand
Like a pallid band,
The caravan route is white.*

The traveler's face is drawn and pale
And he prays beneath his breath ;
For the bones of Dead Things fill the trail
Like the road to the gates of Death.

*Instead of stones
It is paved with bones,
Like the road to the gates of Death.*

The men of Egypt, the men of Rome,
The men of many a land
Lay down to die far away from home
On the road through the weary sand.

*They died, and each
Left his bones to bleach
On the road through the weary sand.*

Men turn from the path when daylight dies ;
For after the sun is set
The ghosts of the Dead Things stir and rise
To travel the roadway yet.

*Dead beasts and men
Are alive again,
To travel the roadway yet.*

The desert is dun at the noon of day
And sable at noon of night ;
At dawn and at dusk it is silver-gray,
But the caravan route is white.

*The silent dead
Build a road of dread—
The caravan route is white!*