

STEVEN WINGATE

In the Beginning

EXTERIOR — EARTH — NIGHT — IN THE BEGINNING

was the word, yes yes, as we've been taught ad infinitum, and before there were words there were no words, and before there were no words there were rocks that broke into smaller rocks and pieces of inert matter that became salamanders or the cocoons of insects with wingspans as broad as city boulevards, who by mistake left no fossil record.

FADE TO BLACK:

as the wings of just such an insect whirr above your head, disturbing a strand of hair that lifts skyward before settling improperly on your pate. You consider replacing it but stop when your own heart, made sullen and reposed by the rhythm of the insect gracefully floating past you, skips not one beat but three. But four. You close your eyes to listen to one more vast wing beat, trying to keep hackneyed, traitorous words like *gossamer* and *diaphanous* out of your head.

But they belong, my dear. They belong.

FADE TO:

EXTERIOR — GENESIS — EGYPT AT THE TIME OF THE SECOND JOURNEY — TWILIGHT — HELICOPTER SHOT — TIME LAPSE

Judah and Benjamin and Reuben, sons of Israel, trudge circles in the desert sand: sometimes deliberate, sometimes dizzying in their fervor, sometimes so mindful in their presaging of Zen that they appear not to move at all.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR — EGYPT AT THE TIME OF THE SECOND JOURNEY — PRESENT DAY

The city this spot will become, with its cheap gas and sweaty soldiers on the street corners and spice shops and tacky leather goods for tourists who haggle over prices because their guidebooks tell them they should.

When the brothers wax ecstatic you can see their shadows dancing like Sufis. Such as now, such as the moment that stands before you. After three thousand years they believe their circle is a straight line.

This, friend, is the price of too many ellipses around our cloistered sun.

THE END

WITNESS 1