

Dune, Shadows: Death Valley, CA

I was awed by the perfect patterns on the sandy face of this massive dune. The wind had carefully etched its surface with scalloped ripples and waves. It was flawless and huge, like a transcendent carving of the ocean.

I waited in the desert heat until late afternoon. As the whipping hot sun sank lower in the sky, yellow light spilled over the dune and splayed across the textured sand like scattered feathers. For an epoch, this swooping shadow ran across the landscape like the wind that carved it; seconds later, the shadow engulfed the dune and the liquid sand disappeared.

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