

Mark Twain's Typewriter

by John Olson

There is an image among these words. I put it there earlier this morning. I wrote it down. I used words to describe it. I used words to identify it. But now I can't remember what it was. Was it a sun? A moon? Mark Twain's typewriter in Virginia City? Where did the image go? Am I sure I even wrote it down? I may have dreamed writing down a paragraph with an image in it. A strong, powerful, intense image. Or was it a more tenuous and ephemeral image? A web? A ripple of moonlight? A stain on the rug? I know it's there. I know it's here. Lurking. It must be an animal. That's it. I wrote down an animal. But what animal? Did I refer to Mark Twain's typewriter as an animal? Did I call it a hyena? I would not say that about Mark Twain's typewriter. Whose keys must have been dusty. Mark Twain refers to the constant, ubiquitous dust of Virginia City. How they even had to put the assaying scales in a glass case to prevent the dust from compromising the accuracy of the weight. I'll bet that's what I meant to write down. That's the image. It was dust. It wasn't the typewriter. It wasn't an animal. It was dust. The dust of Virginia City. Quiet as a whisper on the keys of Mark Twain's typewriter.

