

Field of Rattle

by stephen hastings-king

D is a stranger. He walks along a beach.

The sand is purple and white.

He wears a dark suit despite the intense heat. He carries a small leather briefcase.

He stops.

He puts the briefcase on the sand and removes a pistol.

In the distance there are others.

They are motionless. They cast no shadows.

Overhead the high-pitched drone of heat coalesces into a vertical metal chain made from fine golden links.

The persistence of the chain produces overtones. They broadcast through the air like the opening of a flower.

The flower overhead collapses into a spiraling field of rattle. It dissipates in the stillness like a wave breaking on shore.

The sun is a molten white ball.

Heat leaks through the air and bounces off the water.

The continuum of his movement breaks into component parts and joints.

He shakes his head to scatter them.

The gun continues upward as though his mind and his arm are not connected.

In the distance there are others.
They are motionless. They cast no shadows.

The vertical metal chain forms a serpent in his mind. It coils
around his thinking.

Nothing seems real.

The others are arrayed like elements in a cryptic formation.
There is a message in their arrangement what is it what is it.

The echoes from gunshots flash away across the beach.

