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Ramses Adamant

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THE LAST ACT

On the way out he chose war,
dashed the Emperor's damned amphorae
with a short sword.

—She should have come on heavy,
breathing like slaves—he said,
considering her big Nile dugs,
her rivened ass.

Tony knew
that war is a green girl always
to fall back on,
to barely survive her thrashing,
her inexperience with tongues
(Octavian's gift, snaking down the steps
like a purple robe to lie in).

He knew that foreplay's the thing
to catch an aging queen
if you can end it.

R A M S E S A D A M A N T

Ramses said her verse
was divorced from her person, though
she breathed it like a camel.
Her body works its hip on the lectern;
her lower lip is hot
and her asp eyes
seek the faces before her
for one more oasis.

Ramses: stone-eyed, stone-lipped
Chairman of the Mountain, 180 feet tall,
backed to rock. Below him
men and women stroll on the desert floor;
maidens drag their veils.
He knows them
as he sees her spot her new victim

whose wife drinks sand.
Ramses hears her intone the cool morning,
the hunting moon and tulips;
he sees them drink to pain,
squeeze hands, in conversation
coil and sway.

All this rock! Cleft for him
by a cast of thousands, his cock
drying in the tomb

while women in Alexandria
wait on the library steps
for her latest manuscripts.
Will she heave another slave
from the scaffold of her tits,
under Ramses nose?

From way up there, he sees
the pyramids as abstractions;
in the soft curving dunes he
apprehends the subtlety
of his Queen, long necked, quiet
Nefertiti.