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Yellow Cake

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YELLOW CAKE

The faithful park récreational vans
and lay their miniature missiles
off Highway 70 in the red hue
of the sanctuary at White Sands,
and all with graceful youthfulness
raise their arms heavenward.

The Japanese are our favorite comedians,
risking a good dusting
on the grounds of the Nike-Hercules
Missile Monument. Imitating us,
they record the magical
unthinkable events taking place
by bowing to the stone and reciting
its contaminated poem,
“When Thy Mother Dies in Thine Arms.”

The only animal on the place
is a prize Guernsey
dropping a patty, foreground,

like the great draftsman Hiroshige’s
large horse standing in dung
in “One Hundred Famous Views of Edo,”

very dull and neutral like the real color
tea, wood, or straw.

Our favorite comedians stand around
glowing like the sun
and talk to a grim bronze plaque
about the recipe for yellow cake,

uranium for the fuel pads
our Lord faces earthward.
We put to rest the oracle
in the ore of the reactor
by grinding and pressing and entering it
as pellets under honeyed skies'
sulphuric register.

Every quiet afternoon
the grounds are alive.
When thy mother is anointed
and dies in thine arms,
the visitors descend
upon the pyramid,
risking a good dusting.

The New Mexican State Fair
black and white milker
dropping a patty
with youthful gracefulness
pastures among real people
who live in the clouds.