Avocations

DEVOTION

Hell emptied its belly,
dropped lava from the sky,
where once stood a compound
in a remote village.

Then there were only ruins.
Barking and sniffing rubble for familiar scents;
he emerged limping
from the dense cloud of dust.

Something in there, he sensed,
in that strange mixture of smells,
which bound him to the scene.
He would not break the shackles.

Minutes turned into hours, hours into days.
His friend and his master
wasn’t there to fill the bowl.
Small puddle, next to house also went dry.

Hunger pains slowed him down,
but he sniffed and he dug,
till his paws had no pads and his
bark waned to whimper.

Had no strength to prop his head.
Ears hung flaccid.
He curled up in the rubble,
head resting between legs.

Panting ceased, breathing slowed—then stopped.
But the eyes remained open, waiting for his master.

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