Crucible of Civilization

Stefi Weisburd
CRUCELLE OF CIVILIZATION

AFTER JON LEE ANDERSON

Doomed minarets and glacial domes, mosaics striated as muscle, in the shatter cone below a B-52’s lackadaisical rumble, landscape of broken meat, bone

tattered to damask. The only survivors—
jewelweed, a jerrican & a skull yawing.
Nothing to knit the slate black wound, to rub out
the rune of inoperable misunderstanding. Sand-blind
oil blazing, sky breaks down
to turmeric and tar, making the Tigris run

gold around greening bulrushes, past
rattletraps that lean at odd angles & a bus crushed
like a cigarette. At home, the presidential sharpers

smatter from their testament; passing their one
beveled eye, they raise their brute flag. Every night
like trading cards, photos of babe-faced Marines,

and, on Al Jazeera, the seared & thirsting
unnamed spilling from donkey carts. What
should I think—dirge or cakewalk,

now cowed, or jubilant as tanks topple
statues & prisons strew their grief. Gorging
on the queasy motive, the next
incursions already dabbling
in the cathode lens, past
the nub of feeling. The future

is a chorus of anxiety
no stammel, no stridor,
no meniscus of reason will ever redeem.