

IN THE DUMP



he was an unseen participant
in this ritual of waste
a flurry of ashes
and a spent cigar
a beer can
two old wheels from a baby carriage
and him

others were there but they were seen
he just cowered underneath an ancient stove
and tried periodically
to escape
they wouldn't let him do that
they watched and watched
and though they never saw him or gave him a thought
he did not run

he stayed there
and died

and became
with the pottery and paintbrush
a part of it all
a piece of the rest of the pieces
one more corpse in a cemetery of bottles and cans

they left days before that with their boots
having broken all the bottles they could find
searching and then throwing against the trees
the washer and the tub
the sparkling stone
the stove
raining stained-glass sacraments of power and praise
and destiny and death
in the dump

they left
and he stayed there
and died for them and their prayers
of shards and crashes and the hallelulahs of old spoons
died
of fright and the figurative redemption of
trash
 total diminution
 of his despair
in the dump

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