

## Dray Horse

Big as a hillock it squatted in the square, mute as a held breath.  
Drag-marks scuffed the hard ground from city gate to market cobblestones.  
(Why do we imagine rough-hewn wheels fixed to this offering?  
The Greeks were cunning and sensible men.)

She looked down despondent into the square  
From the palace keep (who was it keeping?), kicking at  
The marbled tiles, thoughtlessly, mimicking the rudiments of a peasant's dance.  
Men were always a disappointment.

The ships were gone, launched this time by pragmatism—  
It was an accountant's withdrawal. (She was disgusted.)  
And this absurd offering—four stiff legs on a house-sized barrel—  
like a boy's joke to the boys.

There was no place for her anywhere now. Peace scoured her innards:  
Troy's silent relief was her renewed desperation.  
(And where was Paris?) It was only hard anger that saved her.  
She exhaled.

And flames shot from the horse,  
Ribbons of red spread around the flared hooves, across the stones.  
(Shouts, clanks and whistles sounded like a carnival.)  
The city came alive once more, vital with its own death-throes.

Her knees bent, and her feet shuffled a two-step.  
(The tiles clacked and snickered to her toes' beat.)  
She felt beauty and honour grow with every wound struck below.  
The men were working hard, and on her side again.

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