

The Art of the Ruin

by Gary Hardaway

Ruins are always provocative.
The imagining eyes
rebuild the colonnade,
the wall, the roof, and pediment.

The toppled stones
speak of time and fortune
and the calamity a moment
or millennium can bring

to human art and industry.
The ghosts run before
attacking horsemen. A heart
is ruptured by a spear.

A small dog chokes
on ash and noxious gas.
A body decomposes
having fallen to disease

interpreted as a god's curse.
Even the print-shirted engineer
from Springfield, Illinois,
with his Instamatic hanging

by a nylon strap around his neck,
will shudder as he sees himself
stretching arms around his children
as the shockwave flattens Nagasaki.

