

## **Colima Dog**

**By Deborah Casillas**

A vessel, a recipient with a spout in his back,  
curled like this for centuries, spine thin as the vein  
of a leaf, mournful effigy waiting for water, for oil,  
for hot, bitter chocolate to fill his clay belly.

Prized, sacred dog. How easily the sacred becomes  
the sacrificed, sweet-faced dogs raised for food,  
museum cases filled with these charming Colima dogs,  
whimsical, fat-bellied, short-legged. Images  
of savory dogs that were served on clay plates,  
red with the meat of chiles,  
red like iron oxide, red like dried blood  
on the sacrificial stone of Mayan priests, red  
as the ink on ancient scrolls, red of the walls  
of Mitla, Mexico's reds, red-slipped Colima dogs.

This Colima dog, now resident of Santa Fe, green cast  
to his red body, lies on the shelf, sad look  
of foreknowledge, of resignation, as if he had sensed  
his own death, the sacrificial, unlucky chosen one.  
His roasted flesh would have been as sparse  
as the strips of meat on a quail's bones, his image  
here for me to contemplate, to imagine the feel of my hand  
on his smooth rubbed body, to imagine the taste  
of chocolate poured from his red spout.

Museum As Muse

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