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DELPHI

Not every age is favoured of a god.
The spring has ceased, the tripod room is lost.
The *Omphalos*, Earth's navelstone where eagles met,
now rests on velvet unbelieved. The site
has had a village built on top, and been
a common farm a thousand years.
Only the pine-sprite and cypress-mother
brood upon these slopes. And the serpent slips
between two stones, a common viper now.

The spirit at Delphi always spoke for peace
unless against the Un-Man, non-Hellene.
For fellow Greeks it favoured truce; and when
that failed took a tithing of the spoils.
Its priests grew sluggish by the brown-stained stones.
The god paid out so long it seemed for ever;
but gold and mud at last have stopped his mouth.

Today the sleek peace-dealers meet
in suites above a concrete gorge.
Their bellies loaded with bonhomous cheer
bind them in groaning brotherhood to trade
their nations' rage. We do not wish
their task undone, or the age of fables back,
but hope through enlightened greed to miss
the fate of Delphi under fire and mud.

