

PHILLIP PITTS

No God for Dog

I ran as a desert hound of sniff, growl, and wag.
I was four legs and fur
completely unaware of myself.

My dog brain was a jar
filled with stars, gibbous moons, and wind.
This was all I knew—it is precious no more.

I have no instinct to survive in war
among the smell of sharp hell
singeing my nose with the world's sick.

I never knew a five-fingered paw
could scratch my muzzle and turn suddenly
to clutch a rifle and deliver an easy shot.

A few pants remain to tell you how my desert
has become small. To tell you how a soldier's
hot fist of lead knotted in my lung

betrays his pleasant eyes.
My bark falls into a whimper punctuated
by my wound's suck and spray—

This is no longer my home.
I will leave you in silence now.

PHILLIP PITTS is a U.S. Army Veteran who currently lives and works in Gainesville, Florida with his wife and two children.