

The End of Hell

by Philip L. Levin

Red crackling flames
Casted the shadows of writhing souls
Dancing on brimstone walls.
Each new victim
Brought sustenance to Lucifer's realm
As hell's flames fed on the souls of the damned,
Those, once human, who wasted their lives
In dissipation, criminality, and cruelty.
An ever-growing mass,
The demons warmed their hairy hides
On the fuel produced by the aether spirits,
Sucking sustenance from each newly condemned
Whose arrival raised the ambient
By a smidgen centigrade.
Those souls too corrupted to reincarnate
Made fuel for the furnace of hell
Until one day when a burst
Of billions penetrated the dark kingdom
Fires flared brightly,
Gasoline on the flame
A bright Fourth-of-July commemoration
The spectacle a mimic of the nuclear holocaust
That released the carbon-based lifeforms
Who once ruled a glorious kingdom.
In the netherworld, the flame,
Unsurpassed by prior fires known to God and mankind,
Fueled by these evil souls, abruptly delivered,
Flared and then extinguished
Into dark and cold.