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Two, Remembered

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Two, Remembered · Constance Carrier

They stand in the sun by the pool, beautiful, warmed by a light like some god’s benison lying golden upon them.

What god, what god would devise their dying? —

one of them beaten and knifed in a casual holdup, left to die on the sill of the year; one shaven-headed and blind, the tumor thrusting to flower in bone its rage would devour, the flesh transparent, the mind to the last moment clear.

Was a reckoning fixed from the first, had Nemesis marked them out to punish excess with excess? Could they, from fear of the night, have summoned their own nightmare, met the reprisal they forced? I remember the shadows there, beyond the circle of sun where they stood like two who invite the bolt of the flung spear.

Their sun has been quenched, has set. Horror does not grow less; it carves on the mind, like stone, the scenes we fight to forget.

We can do nothing now to pay them a final grace but keep their image alive, held like an amulet to show us one side of the coin whose other face is despair.