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KRISTINE SOMERVILLE

Along the Thames

A man I met in London looked like a long lost twin of my lover who had killed himself. We walked along the Thames where roses flashed brightly despite the dull day. I repeated to myself Samuel, Samuel, Samuel, afraid I would call him Reg. Fog hovered over the river's surface. Beneath an arched bridge a line of geese swam to crusts of bread. They dove; their tail feathers rose out of the water like cobblestones leading toward the shore. A woman on the place said she studied birds. She had read that when a goose can no longer fly with the flock, two birds accompany him to the ground. They stay at his side until he gets better or dies. Samuel and I sat on a bench. There was the distant hum of traffic, of people talking, of dogs barking. My best friend was with us. She had dated Reg years before. Did her arm touch his the way I let mine press against him? I leaned forward, but I couldn't tell. The sky darkened, then gray drizzle. Six months and Pam and I hadn't even talked about him. Then, when Samuel was gone, we sat alone in our hotel room, yellow curtains, yellow bedspreads, glitter sparkling on the ceiling when we turned out the lights.