

Two Brothers

by Charles Lennox

Two brothers. Running. Over San Francisco hills. Climbing high rise scaffolds. Leaping from rooftop to rooftop. Like the antelope. Boundless and airless. Grace working in their joints. To the west you can spot the Pacific. An ocean neither brother will ever cross. Nor lay eyes on again. There. The older brother. Chasing after the younger. Intent on doing him bodily harm. A hammer with a red wood handle tucked in his belt. The younger brother is empty handed. Defenseless. So he flees. They run nonstop for weeks. Between traffic stalled cars. Down forgotten subways tunnels drilled long ago in the cold earth. Past burning sugarcane fields. Sometimes the younger looks back. Sees his brother and calls out to him. Wait. Let's talk about this a moment. A drink will do you good. But there is no agreement. No gray cloud unrolling from those eyes. The older brother draws near. Now fingertips away. He takes hold of the boy by the throat. Hammering out the blood they share. This happens when the night is at its most dark. Where the known world is fast asleep. Dreaming of skydrops. In the end there is no burial. Or moment of silence in all that blackened silence. The older brother returns home. Puts together wood benches and rocking chairs with the same blood dried hammer. He pushes back the half eaten dinner plate. His appetite gone. Because everything carries with it the smell of rust. On clear evenings he remembers. How the light of the moon was bluer when he was a child. Some years pass. The older brother marries. And names his first son Colby. Though no one quite knows why.

