Double Vision

by John Wentworth Chapin

Angela knew the sensation she caused as she approached Jeanne's casket carrying a white rose; it would agonize everyone at the gravesite to watch the identical twin approach. The girls had always been together, from moments after conception and first meiosis till 28 years later when the elevator decapitated Jeanne as she struggled to extricate herself from the doors, Angela at her side. Now the survivor faced the perished, those two identical faces brought together one last time. She knew the increased weeping from the folding chairs on the grass was as much for her, remaining in the world alone without her constant companion, as it was for Jeanne — always one life, one identity, one half. To conceive of them separated was unthinkable to every wet-eyed soul at the burial.

Angela imagined tomorrow: free for the first time. Neither had ever dared let the other out of her sight from overwhelming horror that one might secure an advantage, might get something that the other didn't have. She dropped the rose on the polished cherrywood and prayed for there to be no God, for the stories to be just that: stories. The possibility that Jeanne had an afterlife refueled in Angela's heart the furious hatred that had burned there bright for 28 years.

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