The Model

by Philip F. Clark

The body is the detritus, flesh gone
soft, the muscled skin obedient to
its final hours; the chest slack, the face a portent.
He sits, a leg crossed, the foot relaxed, unshod.
The hair, dark and oiled.
Even the room is pensive: paint and brushes
the furniture of claustrophobic doom.
He thinks he'll get through this.
The skin has been loved to no avail.
It is the world of the back of things,
a canvas facing away, its bone of wood
a prescient grasp for purchase.
The light in the room is from above,
some last benediction -- a call to waking,
and questions. Suited, he is beautiful,
strong, and the center of attention.
The morning is flaccid and filled with augury.
The edges have ripped the skin; a scar
suffused with some memory of pain.
This is the world of an urgent art,
the room silent, except for the constant
sound of the camera. He is hungry,
perhaps needs drink. He is about to turn
and face us, show us it is not really like this.

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