

An Act of Faith

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Flat, oval galaxies float—indeterminately
Distant yet distinct—above. . .glimmer and prepare
To fade into determinate darkness.

Hands outstretched, out-wrenched almost,
With elbows knotting against crosspieces
Feeling roughly hewn—wood-knot-grained chenille.

Warm bands connect to flesh, connect warm flesh
To colder, harder surfaces, not tight—not overtly
Binding—but solid, firm, inescapably taut.

Another band—broader, less articulate, somewhere
Between shin and ankle, perhaps, or higher yet,
Almost knee—and I lie quietly restrained

As deaf hands slip garments down, uncover
Privacies no longer private, mark with cold black
Ink and wash with bleakly orange disinfectant.

And I stare, blink once, as the curving cup
Nestles nose and throat and feeds my lungs
A sleep and dreams of painful, waking, painlessness.