

A parable on blindness

by [Stella Nesanovich](#) in the [May 15, 2013](#) issue

My father awoke blind at age seven,  
casualty of a viral infection.  
With his sight restored six weeks later,  
lessons had been etched  
in his vision. When his children  
were born, he added names as rich  
as chocolate over cream:  
Joy, the eldest, was his Piggy;  
Laurene he called Boosie;  
Duckle Dunn he dubbed me.

Sometimes I thought we were as feeble  
as Chinese maidens, foot-bound  
to home, yet when he broke  
his ankle, he filled his days  
as my playmate, trimming paper  
dolls to please me.  
He didn't intend to cripple,  
spent himself in ways  
my mother couldn't imagine.

What later disabled his dreams,  
birthed his despair?  
Phone calls to beg orders  
for the oysters he peddled  
after his business failed?  
Brothers who betrayed  
by siphoning customers?  
How I learned to resent his failures:  
the overdue rent, unpaid bills.  
Only grief when he died  
could stir me to see.