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Oh, Brother

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Oh, Brother

Mary Dengler

We met again this summer after years
Of busy work, each “terribly changed.”
He was slimmer in the jaw, his face
Chisled, his eyes softened by a year
Of pain, his hair a thick shock of silver grey,
His sky-blue shirt and faded jeans impeccable
As ever on his tall, slender frame.
I threaded sun-set diners, heading toward him for a cup of brew.
O Dad!—It could have been. No, brother—
Now “the father in the man.” I drew
My breath, so close the image to the source,
Then breathed it out to answer all
That wit and dreamy smile. Expressions like
“ye-hes , my dear” were Mother, as
He scanned the harbor, sails, and pier
In bliss, then reeled me in for one
More round of talk. We spoke of time,
Its cunning strokes—the ways that sent
Us from, then back, to God—in brogue
Of younger days. We’d grown into the people
We’d become, mere image-bearers of
Our dead, whose thoughts we’d battled
Till they wore us down and tied, then set
Us free with all their stark and simple Truth,
To parse it how we may.