

# CAROLINE

ALEX NEWMAN

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The creases in her hands  
were ironed once  
and iron-wrought  
clutched like twin vises  
blotched the hue of bleach  
as she gripped the puppet's strings  
reigned them up  
and made the beast dance

Wind shook the steel shell  
bellowed at its underbelly  
braced her back to leather straps  
cringed her brow  
over a sky-blue glare  
crackling with lightning  
until the basilisk beneath moaned  
trembled  
then settled in the stars

The stars hang higher from the patio  
the furrow of the brow  
has softened  
accompanied by new furrows  
as she gazes up  
the shards of lightning  
long ago dimmed to a pearly gleam  
the hands that tamed the beast  
now shake  
under the weight of a glass of rosé

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She has no say  
nor have I  
but I will recall someday  
as she does now  
the days when  
    the sky was her oyster  
    the engines her chariot  
    and the cane  
        mere misty imagination