CAROLINE

ALEX NEWMAN

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
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