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## Other Laws of Physics

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## Other Laws of Physics

by Julia McDaniel

1.

My father, with his brisk, fumbling hands,  
should not have handled glass. He had failed  
to learn the fine science of matter not just once  
but many times beyond me. There was something  
about the softness of the wrong woman's lips  
that pressed his mind to the skeletons  
of ash, the ones tucked precariously between  
the thrum of his heart and the molting threads  
of his suspenders. He should have studied  
the nature of refracted light instead. After she left him,  
the woman he could not love said he had been haunted  
by a room of perfectly efficient mirrors, never grasping  
what it would contain except for the latent glow  
of its own intensity. What could she understand  
of a lapsed physicist with no consolation  
but the angel wings he carved out of sapphire shards?  
They were never meant for her, she knew:  
they belonged to his theory of faultless edges,  
as if he could encage transcendence in the grip  
of his shuttered windows.

2.

On Sundays, we rise together in that blistering,  
early-morning blue. The sunlight floods  
the kneeling angels' faces with some fear  
or awe that is almost alive. It is never in their wings:  
I've traced them closely through the service  
because I do not believe in god, and you hold my hand  
although you say I have placed my faith in a science  
no less terrifying than yours. I am here  
because you are here. Because I've heard you say  
you love me and caught the prayer in that same  
exhaling breath, because when you bend your head  
over your Bible although you do not need the words  
I see how you might look when you are whole  
and brimming to your edges and yet alone.  
Because there is a certain peace as the angels  
wait for you to find me again, to pull closer

as our eyes meet. Do you not see? They wait  
in the room of our own infinity.