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A Little Liaison

by H. Bruce McEver

A failing moon rises between the twin spires
of a ghostly Cologne cathedral
that loom over the old Roman city on the Rhine
like great spaceships that never got home.

I meet the wife of an old friend
at a nearby cafe.
She is with a date
who's brought her flowers
and an obsequious grin.

She tells me her husband's
enterprise struggles in the east.
He spends too much time there.
She tennises at ten,
there's a new apartment in Nice,
a new Mercedes, and yes . . . her new friend.

I remember their wedding day in Paris
and the incredibly handsome pair;
also, their first child pinned in a blue blanket
to contain him while daddy
ran a smelter in Tennessee.

I excuse myself early
and walk a damp stone-inlaid street
of antique dealers
who sell without sin the freshly unearthed
shards of their Roman past.

Like little European affairs
and those twin gothic spires
that took six hundred years to build,
we blacken
with our burning of coal.

