

# Going Blind



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BY NOW, my friend August was flat as a man of ginger-bread, buckled at the knees and curled at the feet by too hot an oven, nibbled cruelly up and down his long limbs and sides. Apologizing for our lateness, Ruth bent down to him. Her right hand touched his cheek and neck, while her left caught up the brown-black hair that fell swinging to shroud their kiss. A dark delta of damp, like the mark of a tongue, had stained the side of her sleeveless summer dress. I carefully raised and lowered August's apparently hollow

fingers. "Slept most of the night," he piped at us. Though he no longer made the effort to roll his head in our direction, his voice was the same as ever. "I ate two full meals today."

Anyone unused to his shrillness would have guessed that the cancer was in his throat.

Ruth withdrew her hand he couldn't bear to be touched for long. She grasped his bed rail and leaned forward tiredly, resting her elbows on it. Her narrow shoulders seemed to rise in relief, and I saw the thin stuff of her dress shift as her shoulder blades drew together. "Were there visitors?" she asked.

Doc-tor Perlmutter, Doc-tor Perlmutter, murmured the loudspeaker.

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