

A parable on blindness

by [Stella Nesanovich](#) in the [May 15, 2013](#) issue

My father awoke blind at age seven,
casualty of a viral infection.
With his sight restored six weeks later,
lessons had been etched
in his vision. When his children
were born, he added names as rich
as chocolate over cream:
Joy, the eldest, was his Piggy;
Laurene he called Boosie;
Duckle Dunn he dubbed me.

Sometimes I thought we were as feeble
as Chinese maidens, foot-bound
to home, yet when he broke
his ankle, he filled his days
as my playmate, trimming paper
dolls to please me.
He didn't intend to cripple,
spent himself in ways
my mother couldn't imagine.

What later disabled his dreams,
birthed his despair?
Phone calls to beg orders
for the oysters he peddled
after his business failed?
Brothers who betrayed
by siphoning customers?
How I learned to resent his failures:
the overdue rent, unpaid bills.
Only grief when he died
could stir me to see.