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## A Sky of Sugar Crystals

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# A Sky of Sugar Crystals

Benjamin Mason

Look for him at the counter  
Of that old diner on Higgins;  
He's the boy with the sugar glass eyes  
And an old paper tucked under his arm

It's nearly eleven, and he has waited  
For four hours for the girl with a heart  
Full of whipped cream vodka and  
Cherries picked by a cold lake

He is crying. Can you taste the  
Nectar—sweet agave—on his cheeks?  
The radio buzzes, between stations, but  
The fly's antennae are better-tuned.

A man in a red beret and suspenders  
Sits down and orders an Americano.  
"I came to sing happy birthday  
To your crime, and offer some advice.

It was cold that night, so  
You drank Fireball (to break the ice)  
Until you fell through, but  
You're no goddamned drunk

And you can't act like one.  
Cream? Yes, I would love some."  
The strawberry phosphate neon dimmed  
And the boy's feet hit the glossy pavement,

Slapping toward the Orange Street  
Bridge. His scar itched so  
That he grit his teeth, but it was



Too cold to take it off.

His hands stretched and wrapped  
Around the safety rail and he thought  
Of jumping—only a short tumble through  
The air—as he always did

But he heard the squeak of  
Her wheelchair before he  
Could get up the nerve to do it.  
“Your neck is so red.

Have you been scratching?”  
“Why this year when I’ve been  
Waiting for so long?”  
And she stood up and

Lurched toward him, one hand  
On the railing and one hand  
Held tight against her chest.  
“I’ve been waiting, too.”

Legs still weakened, she collapsed  
Into his arms and he held her  
Like the nest holds a bird before flight  
And guided her back to her seat.

As he pushed her along the river  
He thought forgiveness a thing  
So sweet when not uttered aloud  
But rather left to meaningful glances.

So the boy and the girl walked  
Together that night, and took their chances.