At the Carnival

Ron McFarland
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By the glare of naked bulbs rowed up to throw the eyes away from the soiled hands of the man at the ring toss game, I saw at the age of twelve my father by a different light. Strangely, as if in a dream, he fished dollars from his worn wallet chasing a portable radio while my mother stood quivering in angry tears till the sheriff came and the carnie raised his grimy fingers glittering with thick false diamonds above the counter. The next ring plopped over a peg with a pocketknife. I have it still with its almost mother-of-pearl handle and its two dull blades. I saw at the age of twelve my father shrug his shoulders at the clattering carnival while his hardware store quietly went under back in town, and my mother complained the last thing we needed was a portable radio, and my father calmly explained we all have our limits.

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