Predawn Aubade

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There was no sex involved.
Barefoot, I went
Down to the kitchen. And there,
A reflection faced me, gaunt
In the harsh light of the sliding, glass door,
Perched
In the flimsy plastic chair,
Whittling dawn
The way one contemplates
The tart
Pit of a nectarine. Her
Gown fell open. Her
Brow like a crate -
Low, short square.
Her breasts were still.
She was beating back
That need to flee
Sitting poised
Coiled in upon herself like a sprinter’s
Inner watch, wound tighter than tight,
Anticipating the gun. And what could she say but,
“This ain’t what I signed on for.
This ain’t what you promised.”
I could’ve spoken out both sides of my mouth,
Lied to that handsome woman
About how I’m still the same person
I used to be, that just around the corner
Was going to be some
Blue lights and scandal. No.
No need to be
Pretending for this other version
Of who I once was when.

“This is it,” I confessed. “Period. Face it:
Babies, bills, a man, a mortgage, utilities, groceries.”
I thought. Now, no more truth to tell.
Do what you gotta. Go
If you must.”