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## The Accounts

Giles Nicholas James Constable 🕩

I hear the accounts. Voices which suggest life is already done, that coming here is coming to no place at all. Just somewhere not there, not then. No profit, only loss.

The interpreter sometimes weeps, will not tell what has been said, something too particular, too infernal, done by fire, by water, inundating memory, language left insufficient, ravaged.

I sit behind my pad in my comfortable shoes, my professional pose, ensconced in familiarity.

What chance we should meet, that such distances have led us to share this space where I listen, would bear witness. Instead find myself a migrant visitor to catastrophe. Dark tourist.

Today he showed me a photograph. His two girls in uniform for school holding up certificates, brimful with pride. His shadow was cast onto the wall of their home, onto the bricks which, when the missile hit, soon after buried them.

I wake in the morning at four, fugitive from some miscellaneous grief. The room reassembles into the banality of my peace. Listen to the house, the still of my wife asleep, my daughter as she coughs upstairs. My great assets, my fortune.

And my nightmares, which I may forget with ease, are seldom and commonplace.

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