

THE BANK DEPOSIT

"Perhaps I cannot sign" he says
positioning a shaky hand over the deposit slip
finetuning with his other the slant of the pen.
He doubts it's valid, "will that do?
I just had a stroke."

"Did you now?" she says behind the glass,
gold hoops dangling beneath gold-spun curls
perfect as the Queen's on a twenty dollar bill
and wreathing her sun-wrinkled face.
Her voice casts a light strong enough to warm the dead.
"Did you have any warning?" she asks
murdering the slip with her stamp,
banging it official, slotting it aside.

"Oh, yes," he says, "a by-pass before"
and lifts his t-shirt neck high,
baring a hairy chest right there in the downtown
branch of the trust company,
offering up his scars as evidence,
like identifying marks in police reports
or a surgeon's signature on the body's dotted line—
scrawly as fate's

"Twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, one hundred,"
she finger-snaps the bills, double checks.
"Thank you," she whispers, "that's all I need,"
and he drops his shirt while she stows his cash.

Brent MacLaine