

Cornerstone
Emma Kinsey

She, standing three inches taller
at the spine, discovers new ways
to bend her arms: at the elbows
and reaching up to the ceiling,
straight past the house lights. I,
writing lines in my head that escape
unwillingly on the backs of melodies,
learn too: the art of worship.

The first must redeem the rest
or face sacrificial slaughter
at the hands of the bounty
hunters still alive in second place,
ready to bind the winners with crushing
credit card debt and crimson slash marks
on the redemptive checklists that
the sinners hope will carry them
away from their hour of judgment.

She, being second, runs up the bill on
no one save her-
self; but she can't give up
what to her does not belong,
and I, first, offer up the fruit that
I have never even borne,
hoping to secure my promised future.