

Helmet

by Cooper Renner

When his turn comes, the starving god reaches to draw his words from the table in front of him. The tiles begin inching toward him as soon as he moves. You've seen filings on glass. He's the magnet on the underside.

Friends -- they arrange themselves -- this dawn is hard enough on ordinary men, throwing blackened peas at the dogs chained under the roof the tornado lifted, then salted with hail from the Gulf. Children screaming at the wreck of everything. It embarrasses even the gods in helmets, swinging their chains

the way boys pop towels in locker rooms. The gods *are* boys in locker rooms, swaggering their junk until Mom struts in, heels punching the stained concrete, with *just a word* for the uncircumcised. Coach, cap over his eyes, feigns sleep behind his office door.

