

# An Act of Faith

*Michael R. Collings*

Flat, oval galaxies float—indeterminately  
Distant yet distinct—above. . . glimmer and prepare  
To fade into determinate darkness.

Hands outstretched, out-wrenched almost,  
With elbows knotting against crosspieces  
Feeling roughly hewn—wood-knot-grained chenille.

Warm bands connect to flesh, connect warm flesh  
To colder, harder surfaces, not tight—not overtly  
Binding—but solid, firm, inescapably taut.

Another band—broader, less articulate, somewhere  
Between shin and ankle, perhaps, or higher yet,  
Almost knee—and I lie quietly restrained

As deaf hands slip garments down, uncover  
Privacies no longer private, mark with cold black  
Ink and wash with bleakly orange disinfectant.

And I stare, blink once, as the curving cup  
Nestles nose and throat and feeds my lungs  
A sleep and dreams of painful, waking, painlessness.