

## as precious moments slipped away

Tom Brinck

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they savored marinated  
vegetables at a wrought-iron  
restaurant with white wine and  
a wide glass view by  
candlelight

she wore her dress of shimmering  
blue with straps slipping  
and a daring cut

he wore his simple  
dark gray suit, awkward  
as always, with a stiff  
white collar and a smart  
yellow-striped tie

they walked along the  
pier as seagulls cried  
and turned the stars  
inside-out at the lake's horizon

at the wooden ledge they  
sat and dangled their  
feet — she held her elegant  
heels in her hand

he said 'it's really  
nice, just sitting here' and  
stole another breath, but  
a group of tourists hollered  
in delight, throwing

bird seed blind  
over the bench behind  
them, and seagulls

showed no restraint and  
swarmed the two,  
in dress and suit, and  
pecked away

they jumped back, they  
crawled, they ran, while  
the tourists made  
apologies, and something  
bitter filled the incandescent  
air

smoke, lit by streetlight,  
mingled with the skyline

nearby, the warning tones of  
a garbage truck,  
reversing

echoing from a distance,  
fire sirens hollowed out the  
empty streets

a helicopter and a bright white light