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Salvation

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“When she’s gone,” we now said.

As you were lying there, I couldn’t help but notice them carving the hardened wax of you into pieces, calling each a relic of the saint we all remembered, except for those of us who didn’t, wouldn’t, anymore. And as you stayed up sleepless, we did, too, all of us children, every day becoming aged and old like those beloved who preceded us, those beloved who were leaving us, and we wanted to call out for you. You could have heard your name in the silence between us, and you could have called out, too. We sat up together listening most nights for your breath carried by a breeze to cull us from our bedrooms to come, to see you once before you had to go. All of us, children no more, eyes averted, stared instead at the ground between us, wondering who would be the first to speak, the first to be possessed by your ghost, to come forth and bring you to the others. None of us ever did.