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Green

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Green

Linda McCarriston

Barely done with growing but enough done for use, big and brand-new to themselves, and to us fresh-minted,

the bodies of boys on the last laps toward manhood, by which we mean humanness, are harvested. Shocks

of them are bound and sent still green, to ripen in the shipping like tropical

produce. They have achieved size. They have produced mass — arms and legs, the back's long

muscles, unlined quick strong hands. It is as though we do not know that they are boys still, that

they have souls, still boys', to which the dander of the world clings benign or malignant, irritant

or balm to the willow-green nap of the soul. Barely have they stopped being measured against the doorframe, bringing the pencil and tape to another and pressing hard against the jamb up toward

adulthood. It is as though we do not know they are our sons, and do not know they are not done yet. It is

as though we did not see them stand like that, so hard trying not to cheat, to keep the heels flat and

the head level and yet to have grown another inch. It is as though we do not know that they don't know

they are not done yet. They are so big they think so. Yet we know they are not done and so will go

when we send them, bound in shocks like brothers, to ripen or to rot with their mothers' blessings.