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Human Race

Chelsea Charles

On the winding path, there are the free,
The boastful, the perplexed,
The killers and the buzzards, see?
The strong await in nests.

The path will lead to all their goals.
No human has forgot
The sweat and tears of trembling years,
The all-pervading rot.

And so, none rest and none shall pause
To ponder that strange hiss,
Which travels with them, blocks their ears
And permeates their midst.

The hiss is none but Avarice,
Who burns the soles of feet,
And clouds their heads and covers eyes
And makes the vultures eat.

When a human falls,
The covered eyes will catch no movement there.
"Go, vultures, feast," says Avarice,
And fills the wretched air.

Two thousand years. The race goes on.
And not one victor comes.
Until one night, a nest unravels.
A human starts to run.

The sky is dark.
The face of our human contestant remains unseen.
Just tireless legs, and jetting arms,
Among the hissing green.

And Avarice has no sway here.
For this human has no ears,
With which to hear the blinding hiss
That brought mankind to tears.

"What color is this human?
What gender? What temperament?"
But Avarice found no success,
No use for abhorrence.

The stinging red, of the hiss's fury
Missed our hero's feet.
The mind was pure, impossible,
And utterly complete.

A child lay ahead: at the end of the path
Awaiting the hero's survival,
And felt only assurance
After all, our hero had no rival.

But Avarice is a tricky sort.
She possessed another runner.
And with the hiss now in the ears,
That one became a gunner.

You see, if Avarice could not trap
This one who'd surely succeed,
She'd take the victory herself.
And make the champion bleed.

She tore apart her human host
With every single step
And when she caught up to the hero,
She fell into the depths.

Our hero whiplashed to a stop,
To help a fallen fellow
But when both figures touched the ground,
The air had turned to yellow.

The yellow Vulnerability tainted
Curiosity's blue
And once again formed Avarice
In her sickly verdant hue.

She threw the hero to the depths
The child cried in the distance.
The hero yelled but never wept
At Avarice's persistence.

And as she made it to the end
Of the treacherous winding path
The child, reward still in his hands,
Kept well out of her grasp.

And Avarice, peeved and yet uncaring,
Slithered back the way she came
To throw humans to the depths
And liquify the game.

And the hero's call was trapped within
Falling, failing, frozen
And the hero's child cried to the wind,
"You are not the chosen."

Photo detail: Gabriella Bowling