

Marcus Constantinus – dream at the second mooring

It's Germany, a barbarian incursion across the river. You are with your men, holding the line, shields locked together. Alongside you is Curtius – tall and strong. Wild-eyed blue-painted savages throw themselves against your line, and pile up dead at your feet. Curtius smiles at you, and turns and walks away. You follow him, and the fighting recedes behind you.

It's not Curtius you're following, it's your father. He's sitting under a poplar tree, with a skin of good wine. You brought in the harvest together. The wine is cool, and the shade is refreshing. Your father is an old man, older than you remember him. You look at the back of your hand, and see wrinkles and scars, your arm is thin and bony: you realize that you are old, too.