

Mirror Image

She has a plucking problem and she says do not tell
do not tell anyone. I watch her tweeze a body bare
quiet as a siren and say my arms and my legs are free
to slip and feel the wind and touch myself now.
The beautiful mother of mine tells me to buy her hair pills
for her youth. I think of the time I held up my own hair
that I had pulled out slippery as a fish. Soon my eyebrows
will be gone and my hair, clean and still. The follicle
at the end of my life looks at me. The root of it could be
how I met a man who thought so highly of himself
and so lowly of me my spine shrunk to stand in front
of him. My mother asked me once and she didn't understand
that I could never say what I wanted to say and what was spilling
out was all her beautiful bullshit, what the body does
when it cannot speak saying what it does not mean.
When I was three my mother held my hand. I asked her
where are we going where are we going we were
going through a market moist and dripping and I hid
between her legs under the umbrella while she smiled at the men.
My mother stopped asking. I smile with my jaw closed,
my hand behind my back. I think of the last time my mother
offered me easy things like small peaches. Every word
loved me and loves me. I pluck at strings of self.
They like you when you smile, she said. I have loved her
when I wake up from a dream in which she is alive
and hairless. She says do not look at me do not
look at me. I look still.

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