Saturday mornings mother washed my hair.
I knelt, knees doubled on the high stool,
head tipped
into the basin: her fingers knowing all the tender places,
cast and slope of my crown,
temple hollows.

I gulped air between cupfuls dowsing soapy drifts
washcloth pressed
pixilated light waves chasing stars
behind my eyes
suds whispering staticy nothings
as I imagine clouds would if they could talk.

My mother always trickled fresh lemon at the end,
then rinsed. Its taste made me lick my lips like a cuddled puppy.
She toweled and combed.

“Ohoo,” I moaned, “you’re hurting me,”
but my hair dried to fly-away-fineness. I listened,
eyes half-closed to the crackling air, her hands gathering,
tightening a wide ribbon’s rustling loops over my right ear.
A taffeta bow.

I reach up to caress the shine, the artful bow.
My first line of poetry pops out before I know it.
Pleased, I profess—my hair is crisp as bacon.