

The Woman in the Mirror - Miriam Manglani

Her picture inspired me,
an older woman found online
with short curly hair,
framing her face in ringlets
like extended Chinese yo-yos.
Regal in a cute way.

I wanted to look like her,
me, with the long hair
I've been carrying
ever since I was a little girl.

At the salon,
decades gone
in a minute,
the mass of hair
stone still on the salon floor.
The little girl stared
back at me in the mirror,
her eyes cold as granite.

A subtle fear cloaked
my lungs
as the scissor blades
gleamed like knives
in the fluorescent lights,
and cut shorter and shorter.

I felt an old weight lift, like
a rusty anchor pulled
from the deep.

Wait! Stop. You're taking too much off
I screamed inside.

But I held fast to my faith
in the hairdresser's skill
and artistic vision
her name already forgotten.

The woman who stared
back in the mirror
looked softer, more refined,
surprisingly younger,
nothing like the photo
of the anonymous woman
found online,
and only resembled
The one who chose her.

The little girl,
swept up in the salon.

