

DRESSING

The grief had made my hair—just
around the forehead—break off
at the scalp. Dressing for the funeral,
I pulled long strands from my comb
as if it belonged to someone irradiated.
I jabbed pearls in my ears, two posts
in two holes, suddenly remembering
the long night of half-sleep with the windows
open. Hearing the great horned owl squawk
as she went for the last of the barn kittens,
the one she'd saved all summer, and the way
its final mewls grew strangely acquiescent,
almost calm—a purr, a hum.