

MAGGIE SMITH

Button

It's the '50s. You wear your dark Levi's
cuffed up six inches. You have a cowlick.

There is a birthday party you won't attend
after a bad haircut. Your mother says,

Button, it's not the end of the world.
But the weathervane says, Button,

the end is near. It says the sky's gone
yellow with twisters. Small white stars

are invisible all day, but you hear them
chatter like teeth. Button, they say, why

not play with the others? Look at them,
having a fine time. But you wish the devil

on the neighbors. You wish them nothing
to pin the tail on. You wish the children

snatched up in the funnel, paper punch
cups still in their hands. The devil won't

call you Button. He says if you must
be haunted, at least be unashamed.