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Three Months After Giving Birth, the Body Loses Certain Hormones

And my hair starts falling out.
Long, red hair on the sheets, clogging
every drain, woven through the forest
of my brush, baked into brownies, every shirt
a hair shirt, hair inexplicably
in the spider's web, my husband's books,
cinching my daughter's wrist—

this shedding stops in a month, I read—just another
Thing They Never Told You About Childbirth,
like how I've gotten my first cavity,
like how sneezing squeezes out a drop of pee—

at least they told me to expect this body,
how it's soft and soupy now, my flesh
hanging loose from my bones,
this, while the child's skull is hardening,
her fontanelle fusing its portal
beneath her cap of magnificent hair.

Yes, she is growing up and I am dying down.
If I can hope for, say, another thirty years of dying
that old consolation can console.

Another thirty years seems far away,

and I'm feeling elegiac, comfortably elegiac,
 watering these impatiens hanging from the porch,
 baby on my hip. It's foolish, perhaps false,
 to view my life with this grandiloquence
 but even the suddenly slowly dying need indulgences:

Child, I've loved many things, I've loved food heartily,
 I've doubled the garlic in every recipe,
 I've had the perfect peach and understood,
 I've taken a night train and woken
 in a new country, owning little,
 I've hitchhiked and the man who stopped
 sang me opera all the way home,
 I've loved jokes, the ocean, anything with sequins,
 the Mississippi juke joint and the man there
 with a hook for a hand
 who spun me gently on the dance floor.
 That I've loved my work occurs to me now,
 I've been fond of almost every student,
 and the one time, moved by a poem,
 I wept in class the way I'd always feared I would
 the students did not laugh at me, at all.

I have loved most your father, my partner
 in dying, though perhaps he doesn't know he's dying yet—

My hair knows
 my hair, surfing westward on the breeze,
 is saying goodbye to this world
 to its bows and braids, its sequins and stroking fingers,
 my hair, anticipating everything—

Who else knows?
 The house finch,
 building, in the basket of impatiens, her nest.
 The eggs in her body are hardening, ripening,
 ready for her to start dying—
 The house finch, busily weaving
 with strands of long, red hair.