

“Something you didn’t know you still wanted” by Eleanor Ross, Chicago

My mother says you are never really ready.
There is never a good time
for such a change—

The lobs of hair were sitting in the bin all day
and it took me till midnight to realize I still wanted them.
I cut my hair when it was cold;
it’s easier for it to feel like a nuisance that way, something to get rid of.

Now I can wash my hair and it will dry much quicker!
Now I can be a modern girl, new!

My mother says
there is so much grief
and it is a relief to hear that I am allowed to grieve so much as I do.

I remember long gone things
I don’t mind anymore.
There is less desperation in these places,
fonder and more forgiving, these things that have yet to circle back until bathtime
or on the road.

But
I remembered hunger today:
blew a dandelion and felt the breath give a headache.

Maybe the other flowers were more ripe
And their seeds clawed less desperately than mine.