

ONE LAST TIME

MARGARET LUNDBERG

“Can you do my eyebrows, Margaret? I don’t feel like myself without them.”

It was important, I said.
I had to see her one last time.

A sympathetic smile led me through a mahogany door into the cool and quiet room where my snow-white mother lay. Torch-like lamps flanked her body, while uncertain shadows washed the walls.

I ached to hear her voice just once more, asking, “Margaret, can you do my eyebrows?”

I plumbed her face, soft as marble.
Her light gone dark
warmth now cold
nimble hands, stilled.

I drew the shiny plastic box from my pocket, flicked the cover, and stroked the tiny brush over the smooth-pressed, coffee-colored surface. Carrying it uncertainly to her face, yet needing to do one last time what she had always asked of me:

“Can you do my eyebrows, Margaret? I don’t feel like myself without them.”

Hand and brush moved uncertainly over wiry brows
as whisk-brushed whispers
fused with stifled breath.
We watched, spellbound,

at the transformation—as one emerging from a fog,
she returned

One last time.