

The Healing Improvisation of Hair

By Jay Wright

If you undo your do you would
be strange. Hair has been on my mind.
I used to lean in the doorway
and watch my stony woman wind
the copper through the black, and play
with my understanding, show me she could
take a cup of river water,
and watch it shimmy, watch it change,
turn around and become ash bone.
Wind in the cottonwoods wakes me
to a day so thin its breastbone
shows, so paid out it shakes me free
of its blue dust. I will arrange
that river water, bottom juice.
I conjure my head in the stream
and ride with the silk feel of it
as my woman bathes me, and shaves
away the scorn, sponges the grit
of solitude from my skin, laves
the salt water of self-esteem
over my feathering body.
How like joy to come upon me
in remembering a head of hair
and the way water would caress
it, and stress beauty in the flair
and cut of the only witness
to my dance under sorrow's tree.
This swift darkness is spring's first hour.

I carried my life, like a stone,
in a ragged pocket, but I
had a true weaving song, a sly
way with rhythm, a healing tone.

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