**Being Seen**

Emily Pulfer-Terino

How beauty deludes and sustains us.

Rapt in attention and neon at the salon,

my friend glues eyelash extensions on me,

for practice. Her materials so lifelike

she needs a magnifying scope to see

her work. Brush and tweezers so slight

it’s like she’s performing surgery,

or taxidermy, or preserving an ancient painting.

She lays coins on my lids—nickels?

quarters?—at first, to still their twitching.

Round weight of alloy; utter dark;

the sleep they beckon. See how

these lashes make me younger, less tired,

doe eyed even?  After practicing enough,

she’ll be ready for a steady stream of clients.

Now think of my friend moonlighting

on weekends, doing hair and faces

of corpses at the funeral home.

Dying white hair auburn, blanching wheat-gray

hair ice white. Setting it in rollers, sometimes

pressing it straight. And see her working

on their faces—pinkening their cheeks and lips,

dusting faint blue lids, closed as if in sleep,

capped and held fast inside with textured lenses.

Her work’s so good it’s truer than the truth.

My lashes more real than lashes.

Their hair, their living hue alive, these people.

My friend calls corpses people.

These are her endeavors;

these braid her days together.

Better than age or time, better than death,

she makes us perpetual. When she’s done

we’re legible again, reanimated, offered

to a world that offers us the gift of being seen.