**The Undoing**

Maira Rodriguez

Memories fall through

of abuela Pola weaving my hair.

Such a tedious affair, sitting

cross-legged on dusty cement,

as abuela hums her favorite songs,

gathers locks, crafts elaborate designs.

I picture her this way years after

dialysis drained veins, heart gave

to jaundice y aguantar.

Ease back, eyes close,

spin into a white hospital

room where I undo.

And I find there’s something

soothing in the brooding, the

undoing of braids unfurling.

What did my abuelita look like then?

Black hair faded to grey, drought patches

bloomed where black rivers flowed.

The last picture I have of her

is in that wooden chair

brushing strands of flossy smoke,

doing and undoing

threads of time saying

estate quieta, derecha.

I feel the tug, pull of pain when I

walk through the narrow tunnel

deprived of oxygen and final words.

To hear her heartbeat again

would be sublime, watch her

part her hair, part mine.

Strands come together

as easily as they come undone.

Tethered by hand, deeply rooted.