

Maybe she, like me by Autumn Andrade

Maybe she, like me, is a momma sending
secret signs of love to school-bound children.
She's only an indication of a human, I can't quite make out her face.
A profile outline, filled up with blue.
It is for her I have stewarded these curly, springy cuticles
trimming them like young bonsai fiddleheads and
plucking out the occasional grey.
I have coated them, rinsed them, scented them with flowers,
untwirled tiny fingers and tickled baby noses with their ends.
On my diligent watch they have been whipped in the wind, toasted by the sun, plunged into
Menemsha's cold waves.
I've bound them and freed them over and over like my children.

I can only see her beacon, not she mine. Yet maybe she, like me, will know love
when she touches my curls, smooth fabric dancing in waves and loops. Sent like strands of code
these chocolate brown shavings now cascading toward my waist.

Conditioned and unconditional
Cut and sent
these filament puzzle pieces
for someone to reassemble strand-by-strand.
Another set of working hands, nimble and dedicated like ours.
A pink envelope travels toward her
many hands helping along the way
reinforcements to buttress her journey back home. A succor to the blue image.
Nimble hands to weave them together again.
Weave herself together again
Her blueness hanging on until the end of chemo and radiation.
If she makes it.
Until body blooms, she can don my chocolate curls;
Groomed perhaps longer than her children or more meticulously than her marriage
Perhaps on a mannequin's head or in a drawer, always cut away from me
Enlisted as her rebels-in-waiting.
Watchful strands fall around her ears, vigilant over the stubble we all crave atop her skinny skull
So at its arrival we can cast the wig and all the work aside because we have done our job.
And with them the pain and tangles, the knots and bedhead, the lowlights. Ready for renewal.
Start something new. Grow something new. Be something new. With the same roots.
Beautiful even with my crown of curls on her bedside
She is a warrior, conditioned and unconditionally.