

The Making of What's Left

Now that he is losing it those handfuls
 of fine strands in his palm like pocket lint
my son asks me to teach him to style
 his hair how to use a brush to straighten

the curls instead of flattening them
 like the rounds of dough he learned to fry
with scallions while traveling in Asia
 Now that he's losing it the five-year girlfriend

gone as if she had never been four-year college
 done the two-year job in Austin to begin
the dermatologist not only confirming that
 the fine strands in his palm like pocket lint

is male pattern balding but that tests have
 also revealed that autoimmune disease
lies in wait as it did for me at that age
 my son asks me *teach me to style*

the cowlicks that warp his part comma
 his forehead the way my older brother's
did who is forever younger than me now
 his hair a brush that grows straight into earth

My brother was my son's godfather
 but even that didn't heal what was wrong
between us We were too much alike from
 the hair that needed brushes to straighten

to the co-morbidities we both had
 to track like animal scat through our blood
My son holds the hairdryer as if it is
 his ex-girlfriend I teach him to style

from a left part the same side from
 where his kidney will be taken
for his childhood friend undergoing dialysis,
 the fine strands in his body filtered as if for lint

three times every week Universal
 donor my son is scanned probed screened
finding out how to value his imperfect body
 now that he is giving away a handful of it

Birds with Eponyms

will no longer have to bear them: eighty men
who called the winged and feathered after men

Townsend's warbler
Townsend's solitaire

who collected Native skulls to prove them
inferior, labeled them less than human,

Wallace's standardwing
Wallace's fairywren

who peppered research with slurs like season-
ing, who feared diseases of foreign women,

Bachman's sparrow
Bachman's warbler

who will be dropped like the parasites birds preen
onto the monuments of Confederate men

Steller's jay
Steller's sea eagle

that will also be removed and the mountains
that are also peaks to be renamed in place of men

Swainson's thrush
Swainson's toucan

who raped and pillaged and colonized, been
enslavers or returned slaves to the white men

Audubon's shearwater
Audubon's oriole

who claimed to own them on land overseen
by more species than there could ever be of men.