

MAGIC MIRROR Sestina

Sometimes, when light comes through the window
or from the light in the hall, the light catches in the mirror
and I see the bump on her nose or a strand of her colored hair
for a moment, then the light dissolves in my coffee
cup. I try to remember not la madre but the woman
who wasted her art on the cut, cut , cut

of other people's hair. The snip of the scissors when they cut
brown, red, blond fell to the ground. People pass by the window,
women look into the salon, see the possibility of becoming another woman,
of looking in the mirror
and seeing barbie blond, not coffee
or ebony hair.

She spent her days at the Magic Mirror Hair
Styling Salon, her shoes dragging bits of cut
hair home, and complaints of 15 minute lunches: "Not even enough for coffee",
in a cramped back room, tiny window
shoved open to let out customer, a woman,

por su puesto, who brings a picture of a magazine woman,
Dorothy Hamill, to be exact, and the woman wants Dorothy's same exact hair.
But she has fine hair, that does not curl under, she does not see this in the mirror.

All she sees is a mistake, another person's mistake, who did not cut
her hair like Dorothy's, did not let her become someone else like the window
promised. "What was I to do? ¡ La señora ni puede patinar!" the words spit in her coffee

and swallowed. But, I understood the woman, I too wanted honey blond not coffee
brown hair. I wanted the pert noses and breasts of women
in magazines. To be carefree, like the ad of a blond staring out a window
at the sea, not my nose with a big bump for eyeglasses, small bumps for breasts and hair
on places to be plucked, tweezed and lightened. I cut
out models from magazines, taped them on my mirror,

dreamt my mirror become a magic mirror
like the salon's, and- abracadabra- I would be in a European coffee
house, sipping with fingers long and elegant, wearing a stylish cut
Spring in Paris dress. gossiping in French to a woman
equally elegant across the table, our hair
up in a do- tall, dark and handsome men stare at us through the window.

The cut out pictures yellowed and fell like dreams between the cracks, I , a woman
now, am a mirror of my mamá's art lost in snips on the floor, I paint, with coffee
pigment, hair that twirls and opens a window.

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