

# Her Hair, a Braid

*by* Tina Barry

## **Her Hair, a Braid**

Lips wavy in the chrome teapot's reflection,  
you mouth for-ty, slowly, and again,  
for-ty, as if it were a word discovered,  
not the years since your mother's death.

Would it help if I mention the boxes  
in the basement?  
She's there, in a tin, loosely wound  
beneath sepia tissue paper, a braid  
to worry in your fingers.

I want to tell you I wore a coat  
today with a fur collar  
like your mother's mink pelts.  
Black and oily, they smelled  
of crowded ships and herring,  
wood smoke on snow.

