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American Husband

Wayson, Kary

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PICK IT UP AGAIN

The end of an insistent autumn. Each tree
the obvious culprit of its yellow litterings.
The girl cutting two blonde braids off her bound head:
careful, careful to let each hank drop
directly into her dresser drawer.
Then the mother out of nowhere, and the girl
with less hair, confused by the trouble
given all the care she took to keep the floor clean.

How can winter mean anything
but desolation? Branches bony as the girl's hand
right where the father dropped it. The fact
of that hand and the father
feet ahead, composing a love poem for his next wife
while the girl waits, rooted in her red boots.
What was conversation is silent: the leaves fall
as if all at once, in bruise-colored clots and rings.