Where She Always Was

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I am so cautious, twisting apart
the male and female halves
of the barrel clasp. I know
you will not understand.

There is your shirt, a parachute
dropped from another buoyant
embrace. Here is our quilt,
and the dim cheek of light

on my breast. But this
is a rite of distance. I bare my neck
to only the evening heat;
to almond and oatmeal soap;
to the abiding and ignorant balm
of an old dog’s breath.