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As If

Melinda Tromara Kirstein

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Melinda Tromara Kirstein
As If

When you lost your hair I stopped
cutting mine, and that last Spring
every time I passed a lilac bush
I paused to bury my face in the blooms,
purple and white profusion,
my lungs filling up with their heady
sweet fragrance, your favorite,
and I'd still my breath
as if I could hold it there,
will my alveoli to a state of rigid expansion,
propel my stiff body to your bedside and then
finally exhale into your face, sweep
your pale cheeks with my long locks,
as if my simple gifts,
lilac perfume once-removed and
now wild overgrown tresses
like acts of defiance could
keep you from death and hold you here,
hold you here.