

Amber

Two long teardrops of it
graze my shoulders, coolly,
as my mother's tucking-in touch was cool,
nights she and my father went out
in the glamour of their long-ago youth.
How I held my breath then
not wanting her to go. She went
anyway; gone for good, eleven years now.
These earrings I've inherited glow
mellow against skin,
reflecting, refracting. Light of late
August caught in their elegant oblongs,
dark honey of the inmost hive.
And now they swing
awkward, out-of-place against
my wrinkling neck,
this wind that's always at my back.
Amber was her song,
her go-to color, wine at sunset,
peaches poached in fire.
How we live to rue.
How love refracted,
deflected, bounces back
catches me off-guard—how we missed
each other, she and I
even when she was alive,
so that now, all these years
later, I feel her as a coolness
brushing my collarbone
a tug at the lobe, though I wouldn't
know what to begin to say.

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