An abridged history book & Totems

Bob Hicok
Who was happier, the first person to braid hair or the first person to unbraid hair? Happiness is a recent concern, a porch light flicked on late in our existence. Since I am writing the history of this moment, I am writing the history of all moments, all robin and nightingale song, all torture song. I know (not suspect) it was the unbraider, the man (not woman) who touched the long curls of hair, of "a mountain waves of a sea happier than the the hair into a stick down the happier than any made him—(the weight of a knowing of ques- a circle, why is round?). It was braiding and un- woman was leav- back, the day was ending; these are mate like chro- is how we see two eyes. Be- the hair and let- man went away, country, another chests of other their thoughts, ing the hair and strand gently on evening, the man ate an apple, the man touched himself, the man rubbed his closed eyes, inventing stars. The woman said to other women in the field, he has freed my neck, to other women of the senate, see how focused my beauty has become. And what of this: the stopped clock when the hair-tie was re- moved? And this: the sorrow of our unwoven days? Whenever I ask a question of these two, of the braid, I see them on the bed, night has exactly fallen, their shadows have slipped back into their bodies, and I am happy to feel this is the complete shape of the world, an inventory, a map.