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## The Girl

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## THE GIRL

In the morning the father  
readies himself for work  
and the tall skinny girl  
who is twenty-five hides  
in the basement pretending  
she has a job. After the father  
leaves she rises from the basement  
and has coffee with the mother.  
They talk about their favorite  
movie stars and how they would travel  
to California if they were rich.  
When the father dies they take  
the money and visit restaurants  
where the stars eat, and they squeal  
together when a favorite one shows up  
for lunch or dinner. After they spend  
the money, the tall skinny girl  
starts to act oddly. At thirty  
she begins to ask questions.  
“Why is this the morning?” “Why  
does God always live in the dark?”  
The mother picks at the loose threads  
of her faded terry cloth robe  
and sighs, “Oh, Marilyn . . .”  
They grow old together. At fifty  
the girl is gaunt and still crazy,  
daydreaming she is in the basement,  
waiting to emerge to coffee  
and morning sun. One day she begins  
to wail and in bed softly keens  
to the mother, whose whole length she pulls  
into her long cupped body. She strokes  
the mother’s neck and purrs, “Sweetheart,  
dearest” as if the mother had always known  
it would end like this and would  
tell her why, oh why were the weeds  
in the yard clamoring at the back door.