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## In the Democracy

Colleen O'Brien

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## COLLEEN O'BRIEN

### IN THE DEMOCRACY

My father went to the mirror  
every morning half naked  
and scraped cream  
from his beard. He flexed  
both biceps, blue  
plastic razor puny  
in his fist. His face  
half cream, half red  
and clean, he made  
a beast-face to make  
me shriek laughing.  
He believed  
that he was joking.