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The Hidden

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The Hidden · Carolyn Marsden

At 15 I cut your photo
from the other family faces
and hid that oval
deep in a white prom glove.
Mother’s physicist cousin,
twice my age and a father besides,
you could name each star
in the sky’s slow wheel.

Now our family broods together
in the hall of round and yellow
prison tables. I am shocked and yet not,
as at the two pairs
of legs in the bathroom stall.
The relatives whisper
of girls, little girls
who were not your fault,
but the lawbooks specify.

Out back the peppertree dropped
plump red kernels over the telescope.
The night I asked to see the dippers
we both knew: it was once
too often. What was I looking for?
I remember you said if we could see on and on
it would be the backs of our own heads,
the unseen parts of ourselves brought to light.