

The Mirror Sister

Madeline Ketchem



“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

-Eleanor Roosevelt

She brushes butterscotch spirals of hair in the morning
As she sings Broadway tunes –
Hamilton, Wicked, The Book of Mormon
In the sweet, breathy tones of indie melodies.
My heart breaks when she looks more closely in the mirror –
A disappointed squint for what she sees in the reflection.
I watch my sister watching herself
The Mirror Sister watches back.

I wonder what other sixteen-year-old girls criticize.

What echoes haunt her? Does it sound like

the media

our nation

in unison

in opposition to a woman’s self-fulfillment.

How I wish she would rise up

And reject their false reality of her image.

Her skin is fair, flawless, freckled –

But I see her London gray eyes, scrutinizing herself.

The Mirror Sister makes a list for my real sister:

poor bone structure

sunken eye sockets

small lips

short eyelashes

unpronounced eyebrows

But even the Mirror Sister’s harsh eyes flash like intricate geodes
Flecked with amber, olive, and chocolate.

I wonder what the Mirror Sister would do if
 One day
My real sister woke up
 Looked into the smooth glass
 Took a deep breath and smiled.