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Like a Lover

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LIKE A LOVER

Jeanne Chase

For ten years we met,
eyes locked in mirrors
as he combed and snipped
flourishing flowing sleeves.
I learned to laugh
without moving my head.

He told me the tale
of Madame Butterfly
and stories from his life.
Adopting a cat. Roommate spats.
His wardrobe for a wedding,
down to elegant black socks.
The disappointment he found
in his father's eyes.
The sorrow in his own
when a close friend
took his life.

The beauty shop looks
lifeless black to me
now when I pass by.
No prisms of light
dance on front windows.
Laughing voices no longer
escape the unopened door.
Pneumonia complications
I was told.

Like a lover,
on our last visit
he told me what I wore
first time we met —
Laura Ashley frock,
burgundy with navy dots.
But he never told me
he was dying. And I
never told him
goodbye.