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## On the Barber Pole

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# On the Barber Pole

Outside, the red & white needle helixes like a lighthouse:—centrifuges clientele, unraveling men from boys. A bell alarms as I pass through. Dip behind the dirty aquarium: sink into black leather couch. Springs push relentless on my tailbone:—try to sperm their way inside. Waiting makes my thighs sweat. Astroglide forward: Playboy spread like playing cards. Chin down:—shades drawn over my poker face. Draw one. Lick my pointer:—the ladies oblige, open their glossy insides [not as smooth as Barbie's]. I could sense the sudden hair on my tongue. I was speechless. The barber calls for me in a language I do not speak. No telephone-book cushion: the firm support of two-thousand strangers. He sits me in front of myself. Robes me in black. Vibrator whispers in my ears: zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz. Dead cells pepper the air. Chin up. Hands tell my temples where to look: *left*. Spins my head like a globe this way and that. His stomach mushrooms over my forearm as he cleaves my veil. The shock of buckle metal is cold electricity. He does not see me quake underneath. I do not see him shoot warm cream on my nape. Sit still while his blade carves me into hard edges. I tip him three dollars more than my father told me to.