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Hair, 1956

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Hair, 1956

David Schelhaas

We were all in love
with our hair in those days,
we let it grow
and oiled it up till we could
slick it to the back and make a crack.
The girls liked the hair,
liked the boy with the hair,
liked the boy with the leer,
liked the rocker.

In the locker room every jock
with his pink rattail comb and an ounce of swagger
camped in front of the mirror
for half an hour after a shower,
the comb itself a weapon, a rakish pocket dagger
Brylcream and dandruff clogging up the teeth.
Our levis low on the hips, the belt loops cut off
and the band folded over. . . .
Oh, we were fine.

Nobody told us how to be teens,
we were the first, pioneers
guided by hormones,
Dick Clark, and a firm belief in our hair.