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First Place, Nonfiction
Vol 23 Spring 2013

The Haircut

Soon my mouth started functioning again.

“What are you doing to me?” I repeated.

She didn't answer. I heard the ominous whisper of the comb and the fearful clash of the scissors keep in rhythm with the wild beatings of my heart. Then to my horror, I observed swarms of sweat bees crawling over the arms of the rocking chair. I felt one sting my hand and clenched my eyes shut. What had I done to deserve this?

I once had to read Dante's *Divine Comedy* for English. I don't remember much about it, but it's basically about a guy going on a private tour through hell. Apparently, there are several stages and circles and departments of hell, though I can't imagine how Dante figured that out. I mention this rather gloomy work because I remembered one of the stages of hell included sweat bees, or some such fearsome creature. Amidst the flames, the sweat bees perpetually stung the tormented and bathed in the blood that dripped at their victims' feet.

Anyway, that's what popped into my mind as I sat helpless that day. Now the August sun was roasting me. I suffocated under that demon, The Cape. My hair was being chopped off. And let's not forget the sweat bees, which had developed quite a starring role in this tragedy. Really, if Dante hadn't found my situation in his circles of hell, he obviously missed something. Most

likely, his host took him on a detour because the sight of it would be too horrific for him to handle.

The pile of golden locks grew ever higher in the front flower bed. Then Mom stopped and came to my front to view her masterpiece. She stood for ten seconds or so, “hmm”-ing to herself, hands on hips. Weakly, I asked Mom if I could go look in a mirror; she said yes, with a little sigh. As I was going in the front door, I caught a glance of her burying her face in her hands.

I hurried to the powder room. I flung open the door. There, in the mirror, was my new haircut.

At the end of *The Phantom of the Opera*, the phantom, ashamed of his monstrous and grotesque appearance, grasps a candlestick and, amidst the swelling of beautiful music, smashes the mirrors hanging in his catacombs. I cried when I saw it, out of pity for this misunderstood angel of music. I was no angel of music, but I still wondered if anyone would cry for me. “Oh, for a candlestick!”