

# Razor

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The sink needed no description,  
and yet, I couldn't let the mirror  
refuse its role, couldn't watch it not  
reflect the hum of faucet water,  
the broken clumps of soap, the scattered  
Q-tips, brushes, toothbrushes, flattened  
tubes of toothpaste, spent rolls of toilet  
paper, bottles of nail polish, Listerine,  
Lysol, deodorant, hair spray, gel,  
an uncapped can of Barbasol beside  
my father's hand, and the manner  
in which my father would stand  
like a shirtless Santa, cream lathered  
across his jaw. He'd tilt his head upwards,  
press his crotch and stretch-marked gut  
against the counter, then lean over,  
flick his plastic razor, erasing  
the mustache and five o' clock shadow

I inherited as stubble and whiskers,  
as a semblance of a neck beard  
that would prompt him to claim –  
thanks to my mother's side of the family –  
that my blood had more than just  
a hint of *indio*. As I'd stand behind him,  
wondering if my lack of hair had skipped  
a generation – or if I should believe  
that even though my complexion  
was lighter than his, the Indian in me  
was still present – I'd thrust myself back  
into fragments of a barbershop: a red,  
swivel chair where my locks were snipped off,  
and where the barber layered heavy cream  
across my neck, pressed his blade  
above my lips, and scraped my cheeks  
till the hairlessness again revealed  
who I wasn't sure I should have been.