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Mother and Father

Mother was a woman with a house on her head
weighed down by the walls and roof
a constitution like a sculpture
marbled, lithe
naked from the thighs down.
She had small feet.

Father recorded
his thoughts
in tiny leather
notebooks.

Smug, self-identified, he told me,
making you with your mother
was like learning to tie a bow tie.
He was impatient and a little sad.

He said, with your mother
I was like Pierrot ministering unto the Queen.
I preferred a woman with a sparrow
between her thighs
a woman a gleam
a woman more like her photographs.

He said of her,
I loved her then.
I miss her when I can.