

THE SPOON RIVER Poetry Review

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Dyeing Your Hair in a Different Language

The models on the box will not correspond
to the colors they've represented at home.
The instructions will be written in Czech,
Hungarian, and Arabic. The numbers
will be spelled out in Sanskrit.
The conditioner will be labeled
in French, German, and Italian. Good thing
you have done this before. The comb
will be fine-toothed and sharp and will want
to haggle. The losses will be painful.
The color will bleed over the white porcelain
in a bathroom that does not belong to you.
You will hold up your hair with plastic clothes pins,
pencils, toothbrush ends. Your shoulders
will darken, your body, grown unfamiliar
with hotel bruises, rich food and strange
habits of exercise, will catch random drops.
The tapwater will be too hot and the pipes will sing
Béla Bartók in salsa beat. You will emerge,
darker, more mysterious, your head
will bear a flame, Slovak verbs will mingle
with Polish prefixes at your temples
murmuring in tongues, and no one
will recognize you for weeks.