

LEMON RINSE

When I wore a pony tail, before the first teen cut,
my mother would wash the thick blond waves
in the kitchen sink by the western window.

Water heated to comfort, she lathered twice
then rinsed with fresh lemon juice, secret of
dazzling highlights seen on shampoo labels.

Years Later, as a high school exchange student, the ritual
was replayed in the basement of a cold water flat in Istanbul.

There my Turkish grandma heated water in a copper tub and
and doused me naked as I stood. Working up a lather of olive soap,
she made me feel at home, though I missed my mother far away.

Now, when I read poems by a mom
who divides her daughter's hair for braids,
light changing the weave as she tugs,

I feel a pang for the child I never bore.

As my own hair turns transparent

the ache lingers more.

Claudia Lapp 2016