

Blue Curtains

The laundry curtains were pinned
together where the neckline
on a woman's blouse might be,

so that when my grandmother
stood behind them, her head
like hurried portraiture above

the pleated folds, or before them,
poised with a spilling armload
of clothes, I could never be sure

if she were, as it were, on the other
side, or had passed on through,
her blue shirt joined with a large

silver pin, but I was young, small
for my age and, if what my mother
says about my recollections

from the time are true, often
impressionable, and could reinvent
or painstakingly reinstall a scene

from the ground up, brokering
details I had witnessed with things
I'd imagined, which, as I was soon

to learn, is all you need to know
about the art of transformation,
so dialling in the season and year,

I can see my grandmother
behind blue curtains, or about
to part them, and in one variation

she turns, pegs in her mouth,
then runs back into the house
to where my grandfather, while

climbing back into bed, had
called her name out of surprise
or fright, as he had fallen.

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