

WHITTNEY JONES

IVADo Chemotherapy

What's left of her hair
mats. Each turn of her head catches
handfuls on her pillowcase.

After the biopsy, she can't breathe
on her own when she sleeps and takes
oxygen from a cannula for two weeks

before the surgery. The second dose
makes her curls let go from the root until
we have to let them buzz it.

When we finally go home, she's ten
pounds lighter and walks on the heels
of her feet from vincristine. She brushes

nothing with my comb, and it hurts—
curls her plastic iron into air above
her head. I buy princess wigs.

I shut the salvageable locks
from her shave into her baby book against
a blank graph for lost milk teeth.

We drive the back roads so she can reach
her hands out the window to the corn stalks,
to the half-moon, feel the hot breeze

on her stubbled scalp. She's watching
the night from my lap in the passenger's
seat—her chin lifted. Chemo has made her

skin translucent. I chart the constellation
of scars: her biopsy, her port, her open-heart.
She lets the wind toss her hands.

My arms around her waist, desperate
to anchor. My daughter leans away
into the dark.