

You Head Down the Jellies and Jams Aisle

at Roche Brothers
and can't help but stare
at the perfect round ass
as she bends to put something in her cart
then when she stands you realize
she can't be older than seventeen
and you, married, forty six, shopping
for the weekly groceries
with your four year old no less.
You notice her dimples
when she talks to that other woman
who must be her mother, you notice
how white her teeth are and how her
black hair dangles
and you think of your wife
home with the vacuum cleaner
and your other son trying
to get the house picked up and how
her face through the years
has become the face of her mother
and how her short, graying hair
barely lets you hold on when you kiss.
It would be something
to weave her black hair
between your fingers like
you used to so long ago.
Still, would it be so bad to walk by
and just wink? Just a friendly smile
and wink, what harm would it do,
maybe, to get a smile back? So
you head down the aisle past
the peanut butter,
past the juice and paper plates
your face trying to unwind the years as you let
your cheeks stretch into a smile
and you see she's smiling too, so
your heart twirls in your chest
as you steady one eye to close
in a wink that is like two lips
pressed together in a delicious kiss
and she is still smiling – you notice now -
at your four year old who is wearing
his “star of the day” star he got
at preschool that hangs from his

neck on a piece of red yarn.
“I bet you are a star,” she says
to him and he nods back, smiling
and her mother smiles at him too
and you walk by, one eye open
and one eye closed head bowed
to the check out counter
where each item is rung up
and you watch the sub total go up and up and up
blue digital numbers counting
milk, fish sticks, broccoli
crowns on sale and when the total
is reached you swipe your debit
card through, punch in your secret code
and just as you’re about to hit “enter”
your son asks if he can press the last button
and you let him.