

## 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.