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Family Photo

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FAMILY PHOTO

by Yasmina Damjan Ellis

I remember the afternoon
My mother put me up for adoption—
I was 13,
maybe 12,
I don't remember for certain.
She said:
“Let's get in the car—
Let's drive real far...”
“Let's go get ice cream”
and also, “Isn't it a lovely day?”
How strange.
I looked toward my father,
who was not looking at me.
He would not offer an answer.
In the car, we did drive far.
The day was lovely, the wind was in my hair.
We turned into the police station,
there was no ice cream there.
She turned to me then,
Eyes streaming,
Cries filled with knives—
“You ungrateful thing!
You go live with someone else now.”
Someone else? There was no one else.
There were only the overstuffed chairs
in the station's waiting room.

And the yellow line
Painted on the curb.