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SUITS

They had only two suits between them,
my father and his brother, so they would mix
and match the jackets and pants, and I can
just imagine them jockeying for position
at a full-length mirror: fresh handkerchiefs
tucked into their breast pockets, hair gooped up
slicked back for a Saturday night of sparking,
and that's the way it was for them, barely
twenty and off to the altar soon enough.

Whatever got into my mother making me
buy a dressy suit with an angora collar I swore
I'd never wear and suffered most from adolescent
angst when what I needed were jeans and what
I wanted for once in my life were penny loafers,
dammit, not saddle shoes—and not that totem
of maternal folly languishing unused in the depths
of a closet for the remainder of my high school
career—and that's the way it was for me,
old griefs, and how it made me look like a lady.