

# POETRY OUT LOUD



## The Possessive

by Sharon Olds

My daughter – as if I  
owned her – that girl with the  
hair wispy as a frayed bellpull

has been to the barber, that knife grinder,  
and had the edge of her hair sharpened.

Each strand now cuts  
both ways. The blade of new bangs  
hangs over her re-brown eyes  
like carbon steel.

    All the little  
spliced ropes are sliced. The curtain of  
dark paper-cuts veils the face that  
started from next to nothing in my body –

My body. My daughter. I'll have to find  
another word. In her bright helmet  
she looks at me as if across a  
great distance. Distant fires can be  
glimpsed in the resin light of her eyes:

the watch fires of an enemy, a while before  
the war starts.

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