

Poetry Porch: Poetry

A Haircut

By Jay Wickersham

All day on the 21st floor I've been
proof-reading mortgages, leases, deeds.
After work the elevator drops me
to the garage. I walk down

a spiral ramp, past pipes and cars,
inside the tower's taproot.
It corkscrews through polluted topsoil,
through shattered boulders and wet clay.

In a small underground cabin where the lights
are never turned off, Irene cuts my hair.
Soft silvery brownness falls all over my shoulders.
She gives me a present for my son,

a book about Alexander the Great:
how, after marching and fighting for eight years,
his men mutinied in India;
how he died of fever

on a houseboat outside Babylon.
Alexander: cutter of knots, destroyer of cities.