I work the night shift at the light factory.
The gears of the conveyor belt slip
silently, and emptiness goes by me
one segment at a time. I have to take
the dark in my gloved hands and make
something of it, then connect it to something else.
Someone further along the line bends
it, I think. Nobody really knows much about
the other guy’s job here. We just do our part.

There are no windows in this factory.
The air is like milk, and they pump in
music that has a beat so we don’t fall asleep
on the job, but we still do. My mother says
I should get a real job, make something solid
out of my life. “There’s enough light
as there is,” she lectures me. “There’s the sun
and the stars,” she says, as if I don’t know this already.

“What do you DO in there?” she asks. I don’t want
to tell her how much we joke around, tell stories,
talk about men. “I can’t really describe it,”
I tell her. “I do it mostly by feel.” Sometimes,
I bring one of the seconds home
with me after my shift. They don’t like it
when you do this, but everyone sneaks some.
I go home at dawn, put it on my dresser
next to the open window, watch it fan
out like a wild thing into the pink sky.
I don’t know why it feels so good to let it go.

Sandy Gingras
My mother wants her head to be frozen after she dies. I’m against it, but there’s no talking to her. She has a brochure.

On the cover, there’s a picture of a white building with no windows. I tell her, I go, “I’m never gonna visit you there.”

She says, “Fine, fine,” the way she does. She reads me the whole brochure. She’ll be maintained at something-something degrees until they come up with the technology to defrost her. Then, she says, “POOF. It’ll be like being microwaved.” I go, “Think about what happens to popcorn.” She keeps on reading about how they’ll just fiddle around with her DNA, and she’ll grow a whole new body. I don’t get that part.

I go, “What if they can’t grow you a body, and you’re stuck being an alive head forever.” She says, “Then you’ll have to carry me around.”

I knew it. I knew it.