

## Dressing the Body

We— Detroit girls, Daughters of Motown—  
knew before we saw the bronze casket

that Aretha would be dressed down;  
some— Non- believers, Outsiders—

called it frivolous: two-day  
viewing; eight-hour long service;

four outfit changes, each dress  
more elaborate than the last.

Beautiful, beautiful gowns —accessorized  
from jewels to pointed heels. I half

expect her to break out a side eye  
belt out a hymn to remind us

who the Queen is. There is,  
of course, no such performance,

though we all huddle closer, a low humming  
choir, waiting to see if she still looks

like herself. There is a protocol to this,  
a right way to send someone back to the lap

of God. Wearing their Sunday best. So dressed  
up they can be mistaken for a bride.