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Cathy

Lenny Della Rocca

This is the beginning of a life for someone
I'm making up—call her Cathy. She

smokes Viceroy, drinks sherry
eats dark chocolate on a balcony

sees the waterway blaze with condo lights
houseboats nodding like middle-aged men. She

stands up in the fairy tale of her life
surmises she's been woven together from lines

I meant to write. I don't want her to know that
the steamy breath in her mouth, her red violent hair

and fatal voice have been tweaked; her
commas erased by line breaks

periods blocked by a word. But
because she has no past she isn't angry. In

fact Cathy loves the life being written for
her: the talking bird expensive wine

friends who try on her clothes
and watch black and white movies

in the dark. Sometimes when she's asleep
I leave my poems—not this one—on her night table

let her think she's written them let her believe
they're love letters to someone just like her

out there in some world impossible to imagine.