How Much to Cut

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When you make the first cut, be open,
attuned, because each curl is asking
for its own direction, and who are we
to deny them independence?

Be gentle with each strand that shines slick
and brown, as you pull it even.
They glow red in the sun,
like viewing light through closed eyelids,
watching the heart pump joy and sorrow
through its vessels.

And be selective. I know
this is an act of survival, an amputation
of the unhealthy.
But each strand is a lesson layer upon layer,
and all I have learned
has seeped from my body there.

Listen carefully as we discuss how much to cut.
Sever only the bad habits and useless tics,
unhappy memories dried and split.
Cut past all the unmendable
broken ends.