

## **Hair Today and Gone Tomorrow**

### **As seen in *Air Currents***

When I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, my neighbor, Robin, climbed onto the school bus one Monday morning sporting a mop of hair so greasy you could have lubricated your skateboard wheels with it. As Robin plunked down on the seat next to me I stared surreptitiously out of the corner of my eye at the oily mess on her head. Perhaps Robin had mistakenly washed her hair in Crisco instead of Clairol. If I had been Robin, I would have taken one look in the mirror and run back in the house, never to be seen again.

A few decades later and I'm still cringing at bad hair. Mostly my own.

But I'm not the only one who is worried about hair. If the Brothers Grimm were alive today, the Rapunzel hair story would go like this:

Prince: "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair so I may climb the golden stair."

Rapunzel: "Are you nuts? These hair extensions cost me 200 bucks! Find a ladder!"

We women complain because our hair is too thin, too straight or too curly. We wash our hair religiously, then condition, perm, gel, spritz and spray it. We get highlights. We get lowlights. We spend hundreds of dollars on routine hair maintenance which is money that could be better spent on more practical household purchases, like Coach pocketbooks.

Getting to the root of the problem, it's no wonder why there's an approximate \$26 billion plus salon industry out there, with over 80% of it owned and staffed by women who are not happy with their own hair. These stylists will tell you that the average human head has approximately 100,000 hair follicles and will agree with you that at least 50,000 of both your and their own follicles will grow into hair that's too dry, too frizzy or in need of more "Product."

Women's hair has been a big topic for centuries. William Shakespeare joked "She hath more hair than wit." Eighteenth century poet, Alexander Pope, poignantly noted "Beauty draws us with a single hair." Then there's my hairdresser who offered: "So maybe you're just not using enough Product?"

It's not only us women who have hair issues. A lot of the guys from the bus in 7<sup>th</sup> grade now look more like John Malkovich than John Melancamp. Some of these guys probably have more hair on their backs and chests than heads. If these guys were smart, they would accept hair loss with tranquility, knowing that male pattern baldness, like belching loudly after drinking beer, or picking noses when behind the wheel at red lights, is simply a part of their genetic destiny.

Guys worrying about hair is not a new phenomenon. Only a few months ago Irish scientists discovered the remains of a man from around 362 B.C who must have had big hair concerns. He apparently used a gel-like substance on his hair to make himself appear taller. Judging from the shriveled, leathery complexion of this early mummy metrosexual, I would think his friends might have suggested a good facial moisturizer instead.

In ancient Greece, mariners offered locks of their hair as a sacrifice to the Sea Gods before going on a long voyage. I would trim a bit of my bangs in hopes my son aces his Science exam, but then I'd have to lop off a piece for the other son's upcoming soccer match, then a real big chunk for world peace.

My dog Buddy has a healthy coat of hair that remains thick and shiny despite a meager personal hair care routine consisting of licking his hair, mostly in areas that nobody really cares to look at anyway. Buddy's hair stinks up the vacuum, gets caught in my refrigerator coils, falls out in clumps when he's nervous, but never looks any thinner. His shedding makes me want to tear my hair out sometimes, but that would be counter-productive. So I simply sweep.

Women like me spend lots of money to make the hair on our heads look thicker, then turn around and torture ourselves with hot wax, electrolysis or even expensive laser treatments to *remove* hair from our arms and legs. Go figure.

I guess it's just another example of hair today, gone tomorrow.

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