

Turning Metal

A brass doorknob, the key to my father's room,
those pictures of him
my mother keeps folding over
with the even, flat palm
of her hand.

I was standing in the shower,
it was dark outside. I thought
about my parents and their marriage,
the way my father died and came back to her,
transformed. The way they have
something now they never had before,
and I started crying quiet under
the water which didn't

feel like anything.

My ribs hollowed out the place my lungs
should sit. Shoulders hunched as if
I had a giant sore there, white and seething, this fear of
my body transforming
into my father's metallic spine.

I am more
my mother than my father, except
for the dry humor and the philosophical
questioning and the startling curiosity
and the direct eye contact and the hair
on my arms and the mole above my right eye
and the and the—

So I lied.
I am like both my mother and father
and the way they wanted to kill each other and
love each other but couldn't
until one of them gave in.