

Genes

you have to turn away,
can't bear to look at him,
the way he stands with
one arm like a guardrail
tight across his chest,
as though he knows
what would annoy you most.
of course he couldn't remember,
he was only five,
but here he is, suddenly
wearing his father's face
like a weapon.

and you, foolish, standing now
with your back to him, feeling
a little like on your first day
of work when nobody told you
your sweater was buttoned
up wrong, you wanted to blame
someone, but how could you.

your postures fill up the kitchen
like thick new appliances,
there is no room to negotiate.
it doesn't help to think
you should have anticipated this.
he is stronger than you
and he knows it,
maybe not why, but
he knows how to do it again,
knows he is
no longer your child.

— *Leona Gom*