

## Orphan

I'd come to help settle your  
mother's affairs. On the last night,

we ate where she worked  
all her life. *Now that she's gone,*

you said, *I'll never come back.*  
Looking out over the dark, you saw

a light in the distance, a boat  
crossing the bay, and told

the story of the fisherman  
cursed to float adrift

forever. You hadn't thought of it  
since you were a child, and held

your hand across the table to  
show me how it trembled.

I didn't understand until, alone,  
years later, wandering the city where

I was born, I stood before  
a black wall, polished to shimmer,

and it looked to me like the sea  
at night, hard and endless.

