**The night after my mother's seizure**

how calmly my father and I talk.

*Seizures run in her family,* he says.

*Your uncle had one in med school*

*and there was your grandfather,*

*the time he ran the speedboat*

*two hundred yards on shore.*

I didn't know.

*Your mother's was a grand mal*

Were her arms going up and down

like Johnnie's, I ask. Johnnie,

my older brother

who falls into a trance—

says nothing for hours

and we hardly notice

until the line of drool

creeps down his chin.

Then, as if possessed,

his body curls,

arms start to jerk,

faster and faster

until they almost blur,

they batter

his chest, his legs,

his chest, his legs.

*I held her to keep her quiet*

says my eighty-year-old Dad.

I picture arthritic shoulders

hunching over Mom, her bones so thin

I could crack them with a hug.

When I was ten, I pinned Johnnie's

arms to keep him from beating

his body black and blue,

cradled his head on my lap,

whispered, *It's okay. It's okay.*

*We'll get through this,*

*me and you.*

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