

Inheritance

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they unhook the machines at 4:12 a.m.

I watch the numbers—red, flickering—
count down to nothing.

outside, the street lights blink in slow rhythm,
like lungs filling, exhaling,
filling, exhaling.
someone else's lungs now.

when I was six, I traced my mother's veins
like rivers under thin skin.
asked if blood remembers where it's been.
she laughed, but didn't answer.

they say the body forgets itself,
but someone else will wake up
with his heart thudding in their chest.
a stranger will take their first deep breath in years
and not know the cost.

grief is strange—
it pools in places you wouldn't expect.
like the hollow of a wrist,
the corner of a mouth.
the silence between
beeping and flatline.

I should go home.
instead, I sit in the parking lot,
watch my breath bloom against the glass,
press my fingers to my wrist,
and wait for the echo.