

Genetic Weight

My 13 year old son,
is splayed across the bed,
as if he's fallen from a great height.
He stares at
nothing—
glazed meditation on ceiling.

Tears flow steadily from the outer corners of his eyes,
though he is so still
so silent:
no heaving,
no gasping for air,
just an endless stream of tears
from an infinite source.

He is deep within a darkness
I know too well,
perhaps a darkness I have passed to him
from generations of darkness passed to me:
a painful, bitter gift
not asked for.

I want to
hold him hard,
squeeze out the tears,
absorb sad salinity into me,
so that emptied of this weight
he can go forward,
move from this shadowed bed,
leap into his full, young life
glistening with promise.

I want to
shake him into action,
scream so he will hear
that mobility breaks the webs that weigh him down.
Movement,
unbearably heavy at first,
is lightened with more movement:
“Break through these leaden chains of gloom!
Keep moving

until the weight is lifted
and even the memory is faint!”

I want to say all of this.
But he can't hear me,
deafened by the hum of depression,
deadened by the heft of emotion.

I curl my body next to him,
and feel the heat from crying,
feel the familiar web of darkness
brush softly over me,
gradually enveloping
in tranquilizing warmth,
feeling heavier and heavier myself,
until I, too, am paralyzed by weighted sadness,
pressed down into these blankets
by my inability to pull him out from under.

