

Crooked Places Straight

My child's spine curves twice.
An adhesive arrow indicates
the bright white vertebrae,

stacked like polished
stones, aglow
against the midnight X-ray.

Twelve-degrees of swerve above;
nineteen below. Twenty,
the doctor says, is when we start to worry.

Skirting danger,
yes, that's in your genes,
but not this.

My bones are brittle – weak
as a woman twice my age –
but they align.

Your father spends his days
rearranging people's spines
yet he can't fix this.

Do we imprison the bones in a brace? Submit
them to the business end of a surgeon's knife?
("Wait and see" isn't exactly a plan.)

What of acceptance?
Nothing truly beautiful is straight.
Straight is a man-made shape.

Maybe
every part of you
was made to wander.

Maybe
we aren't supposed to see
the body's secrets.

Maybe
you were meant to be
a perfectly imperfect mystery.