It was my mother’s skin, at first, 
my fingertips tracing 
imaginary lines inside the margin 
formed by the furrow 
of her back. It would read: 
Don’t ever leave, or 
more likely: Let me go.

Freckles later became my fixation, 
particularly, those hidden beneath 
her right eye, painted 
by the stroke of his fist. 
With my thumb, I erased 
lachrymal lines mixed with plum Lancome, 
connecting each freckle, 
spelling out her character: 
Complicated.

At times, it was the obscure face 
of the shower door 
foleged over by foreplay. 
I’d catch a glimpse 
of the medicine cabinet 
through the imprint left behind 
by my wife’s palm, 
as I entered her from behind. 
As she washed between her thighs, 
I’d write her name on the glass. 
Only then, would she turn 
with cupped hands at chest height, 
and splash water on the glass, 
erasing her name.

I’d run my fingers 
along the wrinkles out of the corner 
of my grandmother’s eyes.

She felt cold, and 
there were no tears— 
only the cold. 
I brushed away loose strands