Daughter, in April

Dixie Partridge

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Today, rain washing at the surface
of things, you come in after your two-mile run
with the blonde grace
of your solitude.
Memories stay like separate
rooms—no hallway to connect where you are now:
A fisher's vest you wore at five, hoarding old keys,
acorns, and bottlecaps.
The path your running made on the backyard slope.
The times you walked and walked
going nowhere
when weather turned you indoors.

How you regretted school,
and your sleep's fidelity turned
to something else,
your jaw squared itself
into what came: Years of A's,
of nightmares. Working out in any sport.
Coaches begging at the door.
You turning them away
for time alone.

Sometimes I think you have grown
like bamboo—something secret to keep you
straight, becoming polished without reaching out.
So many times it has felt like this . . .
little I can do except
iron these tall-sized shirts with the pockets
you love, add vegetables to soup,
study your vigilant silence.

—Dixie Partridge