

**Tammy Robacker**

**MOTHER, MORGUE**

My mother had the chance  
to leave early. By way of Auto-  
bahn. A happy accident

driving with boys and liquor  
on her sweet 16. Doctors picked  
crushed windshield chips

from her cheeks. They plucked  
eye teeth, some thigh and  
a knee. Then they parked her

on the cooling rack.  
Nothing more they could do.  
It was ordered—orderly

death. Medical machinations  
powering down. The journeying  
gurney bottomed out

in the hospital  
basement. Blood still seeping  
at her snaggle teeth.

For her,  
all the world could do  
was done.

She could have gone  
under. She could have drowned  
the mere idea of me

way back then: Ophelia  
of Europa. Perpetually mythic  
and pre-conceived

in the brackish River  
of Forget. Instead, she sat  
up. Jarred

and unfinished  
in the pickling liquid. Disoriented  
by her own

importance. Her broken  
face reckoning at the glass  
to come back in.