

charley horse

leg hurting tonight reminds me of how my dad + I used to
run across each other in the dark
when I was little + my leg would hurt.

he had a lot of leg cramps at night
he called that *a goddam charley horse*
I used to wake up with intense pain in my leg
the leg I broke
trying to catch up with him
when I was first learning to walk.

sometimes we'd both wake up at the same time
on the same night
I liked this because I got to spend some quiet time
alone with him.

I never wanted to go back to bed on those nights
we'd sit in the living room or the kitchen
in the dark or with a dim light on
he seemed more open in those moments
I didn't feel like he hated me then
maybe it was because he was sleepy
or in pain.

those were special occasions for me
nothing to accomplish or be judged on
we each had our own pain
similar but not the same
he was empathetic
I felt connected to him.

in those brief moments
I always felt that I was just like him
just like I always wanted to be.