

# To my sister, the artist

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Kate Marquam

the day we met, you handed me  
a ball of yarn and taught me to knit  
using only my fingers. you tied  
our hands together, demanded  
we construct a chain so long  
that no matter how far apart  
we stood, we'd still be connected.  
years later, you wove that knitting  
into a tapestry for my grandmother's

christmas gift. little sister, you  
can make art from anything.  
clearance-bin fabric, leftover  
scraps of family cut at odd angles  
around a missing father, your own  
body. ballet has taught you  
to contort yourself into others'  
creativities. it asks a precise  
harshness that I see in the snapback  
unapology of your wit, but not

your pirouette. I beg you, little sister,  
stay soft. may your ribcage  
never be serrated and starving.  
may you always be just a little  
off-beat from the crowd, keep  
that ballerina grace, but not  
the conformity. I was done

finding things to love about  
this world until I saw what you  
could do with it. keep making joy  
from everything you can get  
your hands on. don't you ever  
bend to anyone else's beautiful.