

Titanium Girl

When I was eight they put them into me,
bolted and bound into the bones
of my spine, one and then the other,

like the runners of double-bladed
children's skates, my backbone;
a string of pearls between them.

I often stretch myself out to hear
my body pop and crack, a habit which
prohibits me from sitting still in

all situations. There are twenty-nine screws,
bolts, and pins in me, a hardware store nestled
between my organs. There are spots

still numb, so that running a hand from
my neck to my hip, I can only feel sensation in patches,
as if my skin hasn't all come from the same place.

I haven't rolled or arched in thirteen years,
only folded and bent. And my scars are like
inverted fault lines which secure rather

than separate, one down the center of me
and another across my hip where they
took extra bone dust. I used

to tell my classmates that I had been the victim
of a car crash, or that I was an angel whose
wings had broken off in my fall from Heaven.

It became a charming alternative
to the truth: that I was simply a
kid with a boring disease that left me

crooked and deformed, as if I had slumped down from
a bell-tower. But doctors said that by the age of forty,
my ribs would have twisted

and crushed my heart. At eight, I
chose surgery because I knew that
at forty, I would still want to be alive.

So it was done, tubes like added
veins brought life in and out of me,
as I lay still as a pincushion.

When archeologists find my mix of metal
and bone in thousands of years, my hope
is that they will think I am extraordinary.

- Sara Satterlee