

JOE WILKINS

**For Nothing,
or Poem Against the Crumbling of the Republic**

Old friend,
your mother sent a card at Christmas,
like always. *Finally,*

she wrote,
letters terribly slanted,
penciled so hard as to sheen to silver,
we'll have a President we can look up to.

I set the card down.
I poured myself a stiff drink.

I thought of the time
she caught us
with a skin mag. Were we even

eleven? That was the year
she was always crying

for nothing,
just crying when she picked us up
from basketball practice,
crying

over cigarettes,
rainbows of grease in the sink. Anyway,
she snatched the magazine up
& smacked you a good one.

Then she smacked me.