

JODIE E. HOLLANDER
A FRIEND REQUEST

Two weeks after her death,
Facebook asked me if I'd like to be friends
with my Mother—
or rather, someone with her name.

I wonder who has broken
into my account, and conjured up
those two words, which were supposed to mean
Mother—but she never really was my Mother—

rather, I was hers:
lying beside her at night, saying
she's beautiful, brilliant, doesn't need
her husband, her lovers—

I never would have believed
she'd try and kill me, after she flaunted
me to everyone she knew. This is my daughter,
she'd say, the one that is saving me.

She couldn't imagine I'd grow up
without her, let her become smaller and smaller,
after chemotherapy she kept looking at herself
in the mirror, screaming—

before she died, she held up grade-school photos
of me and showed them to everyone she knew
saying: this was my daughter,
the one that is killing me—

THE METRONOME

She set the metronome ticking,
her children the pendulums, rocking
back and forth from Mother to Father,
Father back to Mother. Then she'd twist
the knob to Father-Mother, Mother-Father,
or call out Allegro!, and they'd speed up:
FatherMother, MotherFather, FatherMother.

Her children walked sideways, their eyes
shifted horizontally and looked dizzy, even
possessed—missing the cars zooming in front
of them. But somehow they always heard
Mother's tempo, and passed from this lover
to that lover, from that lover to this,
or faster: thislover-thatlover; thatloverthislover,
always obeying that ticking in their heads.