

# The Messenger

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## Masked

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## Masked // Natalie Shaw

My mother left the candles out from Christmas  
for me, because coming home in the dark  
to a dark house  
is like coming home to a crypt:

the wide windows,  
dead eyes that never blink;

the rusted door,  
tight like muscles upon which rigor mortis has set;

my key,  
the mortician.

Electric candles offer a fake glow  
like rouge applied to powdered lips of the dead.

Tonight, my house is a crypt  
a silent veil of inked darkness  
punctured by the false light  
of counterfeit flame.