All the Metal My Parents Invested in Me

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The braces that straightened crooked eye teeth.
The flute that rubbed my lips raw into those braces, until the wounds closed over with slick new calamari lined lips.
A permanent retainer that even now, as I tell you about it, I run my tongue across.
The ear piercing, a suburban act of defiance buried deep in my cartilage and covered by hair, paid for with one weeks of well intentioned grocery money, and discovered immediately upon my late arrival to my own birthday dinner.
The fishing reels, well oiled and laced with Day-Glo line, for days of walking through rivers.
The hair thin hooks that I inevitably wrapped your thick, expensive yarn around, and tied into the same wooly caterpillar.
The spikes that ground the dirt of countless counties, and kissed the occasional calf.
Grandmothers' costume jewelry that I twirl in class, thinking about oversized Go Fish cards and ungessoed canvas.
New cookie sheets, to replace the ones my roommates burnt the terrible first tries at bad recipe remains onto, and took when they moved out.
Sharp knives for chopping vegetables, my initials hand carved in wobbly letters on the handle.
The bags of change swept off you dressers because you suspected the balance of my bank account, through the loss of weight and careful calculation of missed meals.
The steel frame of a car to carry me, on humming tires, home again.