

Rebecca Pelky

Mowing the Lawn

Curled around myself I shuffle
out of the shadowed glass door
into overexposed August.
For a moment my skin recalls
the soothing cool incandescent interior
of the clinic
but summer presses me too close to her damp breast
and I have to remember instead
to force her thick breath into my lungs.

It's just like mowing the lawn,
he'd said, snipsnip the stems
before they get too tall, but
there will always be more
seeds. The yard has to be tidy
when the neighbors stop by.

Sweat beads my face, cramps contract
my stomach and I lurch
to the brittle lawn to heave.
There is nothing left in my guts
to expel. My fingers rake the dry
grass, nails digging down for the fertile
earth. The sharp stalks blur
to mottled tan and
I can't help

but wonder if
with my tears
they, at least, will
grow.