

*Karyna McGlynn*

## AN ANNUAL DELIVERY OF COCONUT CAKE

My father takes out his knives —  
polishes one with spit, says he's waiting  
for the messenger. He always hated coconut.  
Noontime kitchen full of the sound  
of belt and hock and wet black bar.

My mother hovers in on a headache  
of chemicals, dyed and set and  
jordan almond coloured and already  
napping through her pills, her bedroom  
lock clicks like a trigger.

And my father yal-lows a neighbour  
loudly through the screen door  
before the commotion begins:  
Something cracks in the yard:  
a child's ankle, crushed beneath  
the body beneath the Chinaberry.

And my mother hisses awake in the twilight,  
nestles two fingers against her temples,  
and my father yells to the howler  
boy don't make me put my knife down.  
And then the mailman arrives.

Our forks scrape the tin foil  
of my parent's nerves as we make  
short and silent work of the coconut cake:  
white sugar thrust down in glottal stops,

in the ten minutes it will take before  
their delicate sensibilities unhinge and  
collide over the remains of that discus,  
feathery-sweet carcass flung out for the birds.

