

Alicia Casey

Homecoming

Our first day home from the maternity ward,
we bring our daughter to the back deck,
tucked into the fleece-lined, false womb

of her pumpkin seat, her knees drawn up
like parentheses. Spring has come calling,
and the sudden shift of the season thrusts

the blooms of the Bradford pears
head-first from their delicate casings.
Everything is newborn: the trumpet vines

unfurl crimson bells, arrowed tulip leaves
spear the mulch. On the roadside,
the cardinal, who spent the lonely winter

like an ornament hung among china-
blue berries of an Eastern red cedar, has found
his dull-feathered mate. Under a rushing

current of bird calls, I hear the low drone
of wings, a colony of red wasps building
their hive in the eaves. A solitary

scout circles down and finds purchase
on the arched fold of her blanket. Sunlight
sparks its thorax into brief ember. I pause,

resisting the urge to swing,
as I turn to her father and say,
you fucking kill that thing.