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Grasshopper

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Grasshopper

by Tom Pescatore

there's a rock,
heavy, tragic,
chipped and chalky
brown, nestled
among the crabgrass
of suburban America,

I can point to it in
our past,

an indoor porch,
screen doors, screen windows.
inside, children's toys
piled high in boxes,

my memory shifts

out back behind the house,
chrome ladder turned
lengthwise on its side

white shingles of the
adjacent shed,
dirty old, fading
to speckled gray

that first child's recognition of death

when rock strikes brittle legs,
a confused mind
showing pain
absurd, unnecessary
immeasurable
due to its inhuman nature
imperceptible
to the laughter and malice

of innocence

to the children
running around me

I watched you die
thought I left before
the final breath
not even looking back

I have been complicit
in your death my entire life,

still I am guilty
still I am killing you
have killed you
will kill you

everyday I am killing you
I live on

years and years
I have taken from you
buried you in them

If I could touch the past
it is in that moment
& and other cruel moments,
moments of my failure
embarrassment
that you are reborn

If you recall the sky that day
looking up now through years
and painted death
it was blue, so few clouds,

How many more remember you?

Where are their thoughts headed?
Where have my own gone?
What have I gained from any of it?