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Digging Ditches

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Dorris: Digging Ditches

DIGGING DITCHES

Kara Dorris

My brother's digging a ditch for our mother.
She laughs & helps & I think I would have liked
her as a young girl, Texas size freckles
or that woman in the fridge picture:

Hawaiian lei & Hawaiian man around her neck.
She walks onto the beach with two girlfriends,
leaves with none, contemplates the way a woman
must stride into a room or waves must bully
the sand, how kissing exists somewhere
between the perfect waltz
& terrorizing nerds for lunch money.

The ditch we've excavated behind our barn
is next to the dug dirt pile of burrow holes,
not of dung beetles, field mice or ground
worms but 9mm & 22 rounds.
We lift our guns, a Ruger & a Berretta, pretend
paper targets are terrorists. Shell casings
bounce off the ground, our shoulders, chests, faces.
When that heat hits, metal burn, I always flinch
but it cools before it or my mother's
body touches the ground.