Meditation on My Sister's Will

Nikki Ummel
UNO Alum

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I.
Last Spring
my sister called.
Phone pinned between
my ear and shoulder
I heard, *We listed you
as Elah's guardian.*
The compost crumbled
in my hands, fell in soft
sucking plops, bombing
my baby tomatoes
into trembles. *Are you
sure?* I asked. Set
my gloves aside, and rose
to lean against the
papaya tree, its soft bark
pressing into my spine like my sister's hands once did when we used to
    play
cops and robbers.
She always let me get away.
Yes. Her stern hard voice. My response, *O
kay,* a glass bowl breaking, splintered, sharp.
II.
I imagine the future:
A four-year-old Elah pulled from the smolder of bent aluminum. It will
    happen slowly.
No. Maybe tragic-fast.
Too quick to buy a second bed. So we will sleep in layers, my body a
    foundation
for her small frame.
Between us,
not enough sheets,
the bed shrinks.

When she's sleeping,
I will slip from our bed
to rub clean Honeycrisp apples, pack gummies and crackers for her new
    daycare.
We'll twist her hair, clip in pink plastic butterflies,
revel in their noisy clinks, young girl as wind chime. Pin feather poofs
    over each ear. Someday, maybe,
she will forget and
call me *Mommy.* But when the tears come, she will
smooth my tangled hair
and tell me *hush.*