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## A Mother on the Eve of Her Child's 15th Birthday

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## A Mother on the Eve of Her Child's 15th Birthday

Nikki Ummel

In the rain, in the car,  
I wait outside  
your best friend's house.  
You come out, beaming.

I cannot hear  
what you call back to her,  
over your shoulder,  
as you trudge toward me  
but your face shines.

You climb in without a word.  
I do not turn the radio on.  
We sit in thick silence, inch into traffic  
as rain smears the windshield.

I want to reach across the console and  
press you to my chest, like before.

I want to tell you how I dreamed of you—

How I pulled you from the reeds,  
how I dreamed this for days  
before the doctors called me in,  
emergency c-section.  
How I cupped you with one hand,  
touch filtered through holes in plexiglass.

Now you press your forehead  
against the glass of my Honda CRV,  
create as much space between us  
as if you could part the sea.

Leave me.

## Ellipsis

As I turn into our driveway,  
your headphones roar.  
I swallow my words; they sink,  
layer my belly in stone.

But you do not know.  
You open your door and go.