

Betty Jumped Today

My bus let me out on Second Street.
Ralph called my Landlords. "Something bad has happened," he said,
"Betty jumped off our second story."
By the time they walked across,
the paramedics were already there.
Lois and Gordon, bewildered, stood on the lawn.
I walked up.
"Her husband, Ralph, was there when she jumped," they told me.
The next-door neighbor came out.
She claimed that just this morning Betty had been out pulling weeds.
Weeds, I pondered.
For years that's all she had seen. Weeds came out of nowhere.
They squeezed out pansies and swallowed the lilies whole.
Weeds wrapped around her ankles and twisted into the air.
They towered over the house and blocked out the sun.

It was 75 degrees and clear blue sky when Betty chose her exit.
Lois said they had had a nice visit on Friday.
Betty seemed no different than usual.
Lois wished she had known.
Now the long red trucks lining Betty's side of the street just sat there.

Lois praised the lord.
"She could have just been worse off," Lois said.
"The second story isn't that high."

I crossed the street.
The coroner pulled up as I climbed the stairs.
When I reached my front door
I could hear the neighbors' son, giving a swim lesson.
In his lighthearted way he said, "You can do it."
"Do you want me to show you?"
I heard a big splash.
A small child's voice sweetened the air, drawing out the words to fit his amazement,
asking,
"How did you do that?"
"It was easy," the young man answered, "I just jumped."