

Linda's Shower

Jodi Johnson

Nine months of flesh-swell
rounded her new —
she felt thirteen again,
afraid of her breasts.
The women gathered in a room
thick with mothering,
bounced their own babies on wide hips,
offered her presents.
When her nails tore the thin wrapping
and everyone blinked in the flash of cameras,
they felt again the shock of birth;
it quivered in them like water.

In the end, she will open her legs alone,
know, finally, what they could not give her,
what the doctor behind his green mask never learns.
If she had stepped just once today
into the blue-bellied June morning
she would have seen it everywhere,
in orange monkeyflower, witches' hair, chokeweed,
lupin, elderberry, tigerlily, sweetpea
wheat-pale, mustard-yellow, purple as thistles
sun-fingered, seed-heavy
quiet, single, blazing.