

LYN BUTLER GRAY

ACCIDENT SCENES

I. Highway 19A, 1974

Forty years later I see her still,
a woman shaking the sun from her eyes
and stepping carefully out of her skin
at the edge of the highway

Smoothing it of stretch marks
and wrinkles yet to be
and folding it neatly to one side,
as if the self she always believed
she would grow into
never fit her in the first place

II. Alberni Road, 1981

That one clog
askew in the road

Shocking white socks,
runnels of blood darkening down
a thinning yellow line

The mother trotting upstream toward us
in beige slacks, cream sweater—
clutching a small brown handbag
by thin and useless straps

III. Mt. Cheam, 2014

With dawn my husband's cousin
climbs on despite himself

Each step a calculus
of breath and probabilities
clinging by frozen fingers
up where no one speaks
of his passenger,

that windshield baptism
settling in his ears while the vehicle
screamed and rolled

Or after—how cold
those plastic chairs were,
cigarette smoke mouldering the walls
of that ugly Wisconsin police station
as he picked up the phone

The receiver wet concrete
against his ear

How she didn't cry at all