

# MOTHERS SLEEVELESS

MATTHEW GELLMAN

She walks home from the all-girls'  
Catholic school under the thumb of March,  
arms crossed, petals on her shoulders,

suburban wind blowing into her mouth.  
She's alone, and the boys in the car behind her  
are watching, tobacco wet in their teeth.

They roll down their windows and bang  
on the windshield and honk. One unbuttons  
his pants. She starts to run from the voices,

the balmy street, the car door swinging open;  
past a shattered beer bottle and the empty  
shirts of her neighbors' lawns. She does

what she has learned to do, what she did  
yesterday: she holds down her skirt  
and runs deeper into the life I will enter.