

Her Father Says She Worries Too Much

but she's only trying to prepare
 for the worst in a world of paper
 lamps & Zippo lighters,

at a breakfast nook with two teen sons
 whose yolks *explode* in their mouths
 & *drip* on their plates—

one who cuts his meat into man-sized
 bites with a butter knife & gags
 at every meal, & another

who eyes how she chews & maneuvers
 a city of four-way stops, where no one
 bothers with turn signals—

so it's only right to worry: to bite & tear,
 to pluck & push & touch again,
 again, to vex with her teeth

& shoulder the paper-lamp light
 alone; because today a man passed
 as she perched on black

rock, watching him skim the water
 in a Coast Guard boat—the kind
 designed to absorb spiller

waves & still remain sturdy—the man
 who could be her life, who sees her
 through binoculars,

who would turn starboard & stop
if he weren't rushing to save someone
else, while she's there, flailing

in her mind, where the cat has knocked
a pan from the propane stove, in her
home that she's certain is burning.