JESSICA ALCOTT
THREE POEMS
THE PEA GARDEN

Sixty days after planting sugar peas

I cut the thin umbilical cord of

vines, the pods collapsing into my palm.

Sixty days ago, these peas were no more than a bundle of cells,

tiny suns each with their own heartbeat,

straining out of their stringy skins.
Now, the pods lie on
my kitchen floor.

Breathless and cold,
shriveled.

This line
between continuous
growth and
sudden decay

is thin as the dirt
lining the
crease of my thumbs,
a reminder
of what I have
done.

Gathering the pods
in my hands,

I bury them in the
trash, below

chicken carcasses,
next to the
veined leaves and roots

the remains of a ruined garden.
TWILIGHT IN THE ORCHARD

The ground is littered
with ant bodies.
It is nearly twilight.
Crickets strum their legs.
Around me, darkness blooms.
They drag the alpaca across
foxtails and yellowing
grass,

pinning it to
the ground with
metal clamps.

_Tie a cloth around the head, so it can't see_, the man says.
Shears run down
the body.

Strips of fiber peel back,
revealing pale skin,
grey and veined.

A knee shoved behind
the ear, the body
flipped over.

Clumps of knotted fiber curl
around pronged hooves.
It should be thin,
cloud-like.
Boney head held high, the alpaca leaps back to the others.

Its coat lies discarded, exoskeleton of fiber and weeds.