JESSICA ALCOTT
THREE POEMS
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.
SHEARING ALPACAS

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.