

*Another Fish Has Died*

The third we've buried in the backyard this year.  
The six-year-old, not as upset as we expected.  
When the first one left, she wept. Now, her face  
is steady with a practiced stoicism. The novelty  
of death already wearing off, it seems, its once-sharp  
edge now blunted. Worn dull by time and repetition.  
Once more, we dredge the slip of a body from the tank.  
Once more, we choose the perfect spot for burial.  
She sings a song and says that he was a good friend.  
The tears do not come until bedtime, her room  
a minefield of encroaching shadows. She worries  
that we buried him too deeply in the soil—what if  
he wasn't really dead after all? What if he tries  
to dig his way back to us but can't? Eventually  
the questions quiet on her lips and she settles into  
a sweaty sleep, her body a furnace even at rest.  
But she's right—I can feel the fish, all three. They  
burgeon under moonlit grass, aching to break free.  
I can feel them struggle and then ultimately give up,  
surrender. Take root instead. Months from now,  
they'll rupture as green stems and then blossoms.  
Petals that, in the sun, glint and shiver as fins do.