

another summer

it has been another good summer
I have not mown down any children
old men or young mothers wheeling their buggies
I have not crushed the skull of a commuter
cycling home from work nor have I obliterated
an entire family returning from vacation

there were other fatalities that I should record –
on a dull grey day in May a robin
loitered too long on a road that led me home
others, blackbirds in the main, timed their wheel-
height bullet-flights with staggering ineptitude
white butterflies zigzagged one last time on lazy afternoons
while moths in their hundreds fluttered blindly
from darkness to headlight to a permanent night

in recompense I became a petty saviour
seeking compensation and forgiveness
snails were moved out of danger zones
spiders gathered before a morning shower
drowning flies rescued and resuscitated
I entertained the notion of selling the car
but somehow knew that such a course of action
could only be construed as having gone too far

drowning

drowning off a safe beach is not difficult
Atlantic waves, a retreating tide, a sharp
belt of a body board, and lifeguards
swimming to a false alarm a lifetime away

it's all over in minutes, though
it hasn't yet begun for your mother
who is happy you are happy, here
on this warm August afternoon

she looks up from her book
smiles expectantly, scans the sand
for her only child, sees a gathering
commotion at the water's edge

out of the corner of her eye