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Two Succulents

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I.

Holding my pen between
two fingers by the side

of the kitchen window,
I grow afraid of the amount

of water the two sunlit
succulents are conserving.

To think of all the other things
I would rather be doing on a Sunday

morning brewing coffee, patting
the dog's head but out of fear

I count the number of stems
and think of the blades of grass

in the square yard outside the glass.
Sometimes I see the grass waving

like a friendly village cut out of paper,
but I also believe the cactus has been

holding out more water than usual.
Maybe the plant is growing more

each day, centimeters at a time.
Maybe next autumn the plant will

be flowing over the edges
of the breakfast table,

pots and plates crashing to the floor
as the stems bend into the window light,

pushing impeding books over
with pale green, plump waves.

II.

There was a succulent I meant
to buy your mother. I promise, I did.

The little green flower
did not make it into my bag.

I never gave a nursery cashier
fifteen dollars and some change

for a small plant in a plastic pot.
I told her I was sorry.

Don't worry, I promise
this is for the best.

The plant would probably rest
on your mother's work desk,

distracting her with its silent
movement, the winding

of turquoise tentacles wrapped
around the wooden legs.

At this point her papers are
falling across the floor

while she wrestles the stapler
from the arms of a cactus.

None of that sounds pleasant,
does it darling?

No, it is better that she rests
at a clean oak desk

while I sit at the breakfast table,
arm wrestling a succulent

and holding my breath,
sonorously cheered on.