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Fence Sitting

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UNTITLED

Jill Stuart runs like people who are trying to look like they're not running run. She keeps her arms straight and pinned to her hips. She is running after a shopping cart that has jumped the curb and is headed straight for her car. "It's not a bad car. At least it runs," is what she tells anyone who comments.

Jill Stuart grabs the shopping cart's plastic crossbar handle with a claw-like hand. The cart's rubber front bumper is inches from her car's rubber front bumper. She is proud of the save, but hopes no one saw. Jill Stuart has shopping to do.

Jill Stuart picks tomatoes by shaking them to her ear. When asked what exactly she is listening for, she shrugs and giggles. Her grandmother taught her to shake tomatoes to her ear, and Jill never thought to question the process. Likewise the kiwi. Jill shakes the kiwi like dice in a cup and always buys the third fruit she grabs. It's a habit that she can live with.

Jill Stuart pays for her groceries with a check and asks for cash over. And can she please have that in quarters if you can spare a roll. Jill thanks the cashier and the teenage boy who complied nicely with her choice of paper bags. Jill has a fear that the cashier and bagboy say nasty things about her every time she walks away. Thus she is extra nice. Jill Stuart considers herself to be basically a nice person.

In the parking lot, Jill breaks into muffled tears upon finding her car door keyed. She looks around, embarrassed, but doesn't see anyone suspicious. Her glasses are fogging up.

— *Tim Lotesto*

FENCE SITTING

Measure not the color of the grass
 on the other side of the fence,
 But seek whether the grass that is yours
 is brown from Winter
 (with the promise of Spring)
 Or truly dead.

— *Roberta Carrie Stewart*