

# Neighbors



We played house in her basement.  
As mother, Ellie crouched  
behind the plastic oven. As father,  
I moved to kiss her forehead.  
She frowned. *You're doing it wrong.*

That year, Ellie's father visited  
the grocery store where  
her mother worked. She steered  
him to the storage room,  
where he shot her dead, then himself.

We switched. As father,  
Ellie hoisted a plate over her head,  
slammed it to the floor.  
As mother, I poured air from  
plastic eggs into a red mixing bowl.