

Jennifer Orlando

## ***What the Body Does***

*Collins Literary Prize for Poetry*

The night I moved home after a summer in Brooklyn  
my mother ran over a raccoon. She said it was a raccoon.  
I only heard what sounded like  
the last notes of a drum line finale.  
After her foot slid off the gas she asked  
whether to turn around or keep going.

I had to decide. That night,

when I closed my eyes  
I fell asleep  
in the old apartment,  
in the golden yellow sheets, the projects across the street  
sound of car doors slamming,  
hip-hop, and shouting.

My cat jumped on my bed, woke me and  
for a second  
I thought I had died.

Then I remembered—  
We kept going.