

**RON RIEKKI**

**EMT Hopes Pregnant Plumber Doesn't Give Birth**

She's too skinny to have a baby in her,  
looks like a pipe, is a pipe. She's quiet  
but her husband won't shut up, bragging that Mario,  
the video game character, was a plumber  
and that Joe the Plumber was a plumber

and he says the obvious, that giving birth  
is plumbing and I tell him to go boil water,  
that we'll need it when the baby's delivered,  
though this is bullshit—boiling water  
is a long medical tradition of getting people

out of the room who are serving no purpose,  
like telling someone to get you a vodka tonic  
when you just want to be left alone with your cousin  
to tell her you have a crush on her, which is illegal  
in most states but not the one where you grew up,

the vowel state with its screaming eagles  
and quarterback addictions—but there's nothing  
else to do and the anorexic lupus woman in a letter Y  
plumbs out a bloody baby right in front of you  
and you try to catch it but the gloves make it

that much more slippery and you just fumble  
the football child until you finally  
make the catch and the room breathes a sigh  
of disbelief at how inept it all is—  
the sex, the divorce, the remarriage, now this.