

LIZ KAY
A Warning

My friend says, *I feel better knowing there's a bridge just a mile away,*
and I understand what she means about last resorts,
about the call of the water, why it's not the direction
she drives on nights when only the car's engine and its wheels
over gravel will soothe the baby, finally, to sleep.

Sometimes, I stand outside myself watching. The boy says,
I want a peanut butter bar, which we don't have, and I tell him this
in the voice I usually reserve for company or home
movies, but this time I'm offering it generously, lovingly,
to make up for my lack of forethought at the store.

I use it five times, and when he says, for the sixth time, *I want
a peanut butter bar,* I lean into his face, close enough to kiss,
and feel the words *We don't have any fucking peanut butter bars*
press from between my teeth. And when he starts to cry,
I feel happy. I feel relief. When I say I understand why that woman

took a hatchet to the children and then herself,
I mean to scare you. I mean to scare myself. There is so much
we don't have enough of. There is so much they want.