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The Minnesota State Fair's *Miracle of Birth Center*, sponsored by Subaru

Before I smell it, I imagine  
I smell it: copper-slick, torn.  
Butter and musk. What gathers

in a working groin. The barn's  
no different from outside, really—  
foot-beaten and humid, maybe

a little more soiled—and inside, a cow  
heaves curtains of red tissue  
from her backside. Quilt of trembling

oil. *Oh, that's just afterbirth*, the vet  
tells me. The cow's bored eyewhite  
stark in her skull. Her chin fretted gossamer.

Nearby, a bursting rabbit endures waves  
of toddler palm; if gentle, they receive  
a blue ribbon (*First Place in Not Hurting*

*Something Smaller Than You*), and I think:  
everything parts for children. Crowds. Knees.  
Thin velvet of a lambscheek, for which

my hand also hungers—to touch  
what is new and milk drunk. To cup  
something pink and cropped, mysteriously

focal. A sign on the wall lists the times  
of each new birth: 6:14 AM, three lambs—  
Becky, Delilah, Marge—that I can't see

through the kneeling team of boys  
by the pen, their lager-yellow  
crew cuts. Only the mother sheep, who

looms to the left. Her indecipherable eye  
between bars.