

The Years, Their Legs

The cashier, unasked, tells me
it's her Taylor Swift birthday, 22.

I could be her mother bumps into my thoughts.
The bagger with his thick, dirty glasses

blinks and doesn't engage. Sweet potatoes,
apples, a red onion, tough and almost

as large as a melon, soon to be caramelized,
a dozen brown eggs, ground coffee beans,

a single secret slice of New York Cheesecake
fill two heavy bags for the walk home.

My hair started to silver in my twenties, and,
remembering my mother's awful stuff,

ammonia wafting down our hall, I let the white
streaks stay. I walk these mornings alone,

to an errand or round the pond with the mallards,
their frenzied, invisible feet, my legs

touching each other as I go. My father died at 55,
as my daughter grew in me. Does she carry

grief's instructions inside her? Foolish to think
anything but her days will teach her,

her shoulders sturdy from the sustenance she chooses
to carry. I walk on my own around the edge,

morning after morning, and when I feel close
to a center, it shifts, withholding as a cloud.