

# The Mobile Butcher

*by Tricia Gates Brown*

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Always arriving at the height  
of beauty. Spring purples: hyacinth, grape  
and wood; crocus; Japanese iris. Daffodils  
in every shade of yellow and peach. Trees  
ballooning into flower: Magnolia, star  
and saucer; arrays of magenta and rose –  
Japanese plum, flowering cherry, their showy  
cousin, the crabapple. Did I mention  
a thousand shades of green?

In damp sunlight of early morning,  
I pass the fence where our two cows  
meet us and I ignore their devoted  
gaze. Their bewitching eyes matched  
only by diminutive horns. The morning

of the butcher's arrival, I assiduously  
avert my mind – shaking the thought  
of him like thoughts of old trysts  
immediately regretted. For days after  
the mobile butcher, I cannot  
enter the farmyard, despite my husband's  
careful cleanup, the cedar shavings  
intended to keep dogs  
out of the gore. I may live on a farm,

but today I am no farmer's wife.