

A Summer Killing

Spear grass dwarfs the cows in this paddock by the railing lines
where four young heifers have made a trail from fence to trough and back,

the stalks flattened into a yellow mat.

These are the young brown heifer days when the heat falls thick in a tawny haze

and the water is sweet as a flute inhaled between bovine lips
and there is always more than required to drink or eat,

the table of plenty being a full and growing place at which all,
say the priests, are welcome.

When the knife goes in, it goes in quick, the watery steel being indistinct.
When the first cow falls, the others raise their heads a bit

at the blood that spurts across tree and leaf.

The thud hovers around the periphery of cow-memory,

before the grass tugs their big heads down again
into the oblivion bestowed on all dumb beasts.

LISA JACOBSON