A Fairly Small Patch of Lawn

I bring out the old manual mower.
My son, four months,
sits on the porch
on his mother’s lap.
The mower clanks and whooshes.
The blades are dull.
I push three feet forward,
two feet back,
three forward.
My son furrows
his infant brow.
He shouts.
A baby bark.
I smile at him.
He shouts again.
I say, Hello!
Then he wails.
He is afraid of the mower.
It is the first time
he has shown fear.

He will dream of this one day.
I have dreamt it.
Something horrifying,
your father behind a machine
that does not slash but rips
with dull and incessant blades.
You shout to stop it
but your father just smiles.
Or your son crawling
into the surge of the nighttime sea,
or your dog ignoring
your command to come in
and then your plea,
staring into the darkness of the yard
then walking into it
and in the morning there is nothing
but grass.
Your shouts do nothing.
You do not have the word Stop
or any other word
to stop anything.
This, son, will happen often.
Drought

The lawns will not be green for long
but no one believes it.
When you have water you think
I will always have water.
It’s right here
and there’s more in the pipes
and the pipes have always run.
Run is what pipes do.
Once, asleep, I hoped:
I am sleeping now,
I know I am,
and if I am sleeping now
maybe I always will.
This in the back
of my grandfather’s Oldsmobile
as I was being driven to be dropped off
someplace awful.
Maybe the ride will just go on.
An eternal Now,
the stars like pins holding up
the drooping black upholstery of night.
But it was only ten minutes
and then I had to get out.
It was as bad
as I expected.
The Olds is gone, and the old folks too.
I got some money out of that
and for a while I thought
now I've finally got money.
That's what water is,
like money:
you finally have it and think
how could I have ever not?
Look at me affording things.
Look at me water the lawn.
Then it's all
gone again.
_Tapped out_, ha.
Water is like money.
I say _money_ because
I was recently broke
and still fear it.
But what I mean is,
like everything.