

## Final Notice before Fine

By: Reba Francis

The grass was certainly overgrown. Truly, I failed to give it a second thought. Perhaps I misheard the screams of the overspill drowning into the cement. I watched my four-pound puppy peak over the sharp blades as if they were horizons. Joy, is what that sight brought me. How prodigious and grandiose life must have appeared from his perspective.

I believe in simply letting the grass grow. Yet, I am thankful for the saint who occasionally trimmed my front lawn. Whenever my car left the driveway, I chuckled at the thought of what I would find upon my return. I wondered who was responsible. Why did they choose to remain anonymous? I wished so badly to put a name and a face to the grass fairy. Thank you notes and gratitude have always been amongst my favorite of pastimes. But I grew to suspect that while saving me from fines, the culprit was saving his or her own lawn from sharing a border with something untamed.

Much like my hair, curls left free to dance with the wind; I let my grass grow. My neighbors likely looked forward to a “for sale” sign on my property. Their lawns were conspicuously majestic, dazzled with flowers both healthy and psychedelic—perfect even. But I was more concerned with the inside of my home. I looked forward to the smell of coffee and the sound of birds singing melodies on Sunday mornings. If I woke up before dawn, I was lucky enough to be serenaded before the sweetness of life was drowned out by the grunts of lawnmowers.

I rarely sweat the little things. By all means, a perfect lawn is a little thing. What mattered to me more is what was landscaped within the walls of home. Prideful are some over pristine sharp edges, freshly trimmed grass with meticulous precision; for me, it was harboring a place of love. I upkept walls that were built upon honesty, charity, respect. Stairs, carefully maintained to lead to spaces of safety, spaces of hope.

Believe me, I have nothing against a lawn that is easy on the eye. I appreciated it much like anyone else. I would wave to Mr. Davis every Sunday morning, as he dripped in pools of sweat that became sidewalk rivers. He smiled with a warmth that makes me almost thankful he had grass to cut.