

# Tears

By Judith  
Works

“Why are you crying?”

“I’m not crying. I’m sleepy. Yawning always brings tears to my eyes.” She put her head back on the pillow and closed her eyes.

I didn’t buy it, but I left her alone in the darkened room anyway. The only sound coming through the window on the quiet summer afternoon was that of a neighbor across the street using a push lawnmower. The whir of the machine as the grass and weeds were lopped off stopped every time the man and his mower reached his flowerbeds. Then he turned, and the sound began again. It was a large lawn.

I had hay fever that summer, cut grass making my eyes run and my nose drip. My mother never mentioned that as a cause for her wet checks. Instead, she continued to yawn.

When my father died a few years later, I never saw her shed a tear. I’d outgrown my hay fever by then. The man who mowed his lawn had moved away, and my mother had turned my father’s photo to the wall.