

## ACORNS

By *Diana Whitney*

The girls can't go to a party, but they can walk at night  
past the old cemetery: October fires, woodsmoke,  
two headlamps sweeping the dirt road.

A sedan glides by like a sorcerer, pulls over  
in front of them. Shuts its lights. Shadows  
stir in the car, one opens a door.

It plays like a movie they've both seen before. Headstones  
loom, the girls run a gauntlet of angels  
& towers, sprint through the dark

up the farm path to the hayfield, skirting the black oak  
with its pile of rocks where they once pounded  
acorns to powder. They run

dragging the history of dead girls everywhere, the hours  
of kill counts on YouTube, all 15 seasons  
of Criminal Minds, secrets

of psychopaths & serial killers. At 13, my girl's seen  
a photo of the bearded man who nearly  
murdered her Nonna in a city apartment.

No one came to help, though they must have  
heard her scream. Lungs burning, the girls  
breach the front door, burst inside

in a storm of laughter. The kitchen is bright with them.  
They've circumnavigated the cemetery, gasped  
beneath the firmament

where even the celestials are predators, Orion  
the hunter with his club & sword  
chasing the seven sisters across the sky.