**Crybaby Bridge**

Lorrie Ness

A forlorn howl unspooled

across the field. There was no movement —

a reminder that some dangers make themselves known,

but remain unseen. We sought safety

on the porch & sat on milk pails

brimming with moonlight. We were too hot to go inside

& too young to fall asleep.

We swapped legends about the haunting,

& worked up the courage to grab the keys.

No streetlights on country roads,

just high beams sweeping rows of corn

& reflecting the eyes of deer. It was after midnight

on Crybaby Bridge. We parked

in the ditch, waded through weeds to the water’s edge.

*Shhh…* We listened for wailing,

waited for the woman in a glowing veil to surface

in the ripples. That night,

cousin Janie was the only one to walk into the creek.

From shore, I watched her shadow drift

downstream. A ghost —

save for the way her body blocked the stars

as she moved between the trestles

& disappeared.