**October Departure**

Matt Hohner

*I feel the nights stretching away…till they reach*

*the darkness where all of me is ancestor.*

*–Annie Finch*

*for Bunky Echo-Hawk*

Wind chimes on the front porch shape the cool breeze into music

on the bright morning after I read the news the daughter of a friend

is dead, his body broken and bruised. I think of the metal wreckage

from which they pulled him, of red, white, and yellow lights flashing

like a sacred belt, the regalia of rescue, in the black western Kansas

night. I think of the taut beat of her heart he heard in utero, her wail

into the world at birth, how a father transforms into something greater

than hope in his children. I imagine how fast a human body and a car

become one, the terrible noise of it, the silence in the moments after.

I picture a dying star collapsing into a sonic vacuum, taking galaxies

and nebulae with it, how the voice and scent of a person linger in a place

they have just left. I look up from my coffee to watch two fawns born

last spring follow a path out of the forest across the street, trot gingerly

past me to the shade of a mulberry tree in the yard of the vacant house

next door. I go inside, open all the windows to the four directions.

Construction at the university beyond the woods bangs on. Somewhere,

the echoes of drums and singing carry a life into the October wind.