Boogie Eyes

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Boogie Eyes

My mother called me an accident.
Not even her accident, but apparently
someone else's.

My sister and I were ten
and a half months apart in age
and a million miles in demeanor.
She loved Barbie and tea parties
and I loved GI Joe and mud holes.
She wouldn't dream of joining me,
but I wanted to be like her, like normal.
Like tomato soup with saltines,
like Swanson's T.V. dinners
like kilt skirts with big pins that
made momma spend time with you
and share the secrets of pin curls,
and braid your hair and touch your heart.

She had her friends—Eloise and Brenda
and Mother had her sorority.
I had a reluctant inclusion in a late night game
of Boogie Eyes at the Baker Street house
that hot summer night when the light breeze
you prayed for made the sweat feel like heaven
and we watched the golden glow on the horizon.
As the cars made it up the hill, the cowardly would shout,
"Boogie eyes!" too soon and run to safety
but I would stand there, in the street, with fame glimmering
and hope not yet abated, waiting until the split second before
the headlights appeared, and calmly walk to the curb
among magic and imaginary cheers of celebration
for my Boogie Eyes victory
over the cars and the night, the grief and the sorrow.

--Lindsey Grant