Runaway

Hester Kamin

For years I practiced running away from her boyfriend's house: studied the bus schedule until it was limp and shiny as white cloth, stocked my backpack with a plastic flashlight, a windbreaker, a bandaid container full of quarters, the key to my father's house. I'd leave for hours, creep over the hill with bananas stolen from the kitchen, chanting the bus's names. But finally nothing could prepare me for when he cracked my head like a nut against the wood panelling and all I grabbed were my canvas shoes and I crouched outside on his sidewalk wrenching them on, blood down one cheek like crooked warpaint, the sun smacking the black road.