

It Would Have Been A Girl

when the first drops of red
spotted the cotton panel
she told herself the comforting stories
girlfriends who'd had a scare
but still carried safely to term

for that night she'd promised her son
and out of town guests
a trip to town to see the night sky
full of explosions and collapsing stars

she pulled the secret back up her legs
made potato salad,
strawberry shortcake and conversation

after dinner she ferried the household
to the town beach

as they waited for the fireworks
children emerged in the dark
spelling their names in the air with sparklers

names whose letters vanished
even as they were written

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