

Alina Stefanescu

Bankhead at Midnight

He stokes the fire with pine straw.
The sound of cereal crackling.
Why are you scared? he wonders.
It's not like I haven't hiked to the
heart of a big, bad forest before.
It's not like this is the first time.
Or the fifth.

The cycle of coming and going
is older than the words we use
to contain it. Older than the toxic
bleached cotton we place between
bodies and panties.

There are angry bears, I insist.
He could die laughing, building
that fire. This is not a German fairy story,
he reminds and laughs again.

It may not be a story but I am
still succulent meat. I am still
sweet dripping red blood, an
aroma feeling easy to find if
you are hungry. If you want meat
with blood. If you are a bear
who likes his girls rare.