Red Light, Green Light

by Donna Pucciani in the September 2023 issue
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A children’s game, to be sure, played on lawn, sidewalk, or ideally in the middle of the street when traffic abated. The leader called out “Green Light,” during which a ragged group of ten-year-olds scrambled to overtake each other, until the words “Red Light” forced a stop. Those who kept going, hurtling on after the dictum, were ejected from the game.

We knew exactly when to run like hell across whatever terrain teased our feet, shod in red Keds, ready to go.

And we knew when to stop, to wait for the voice of It, a god of sorts, to halt us in our tracks. We stilled ourselves, often balancing on one foot, one leg rooted to the ground, the other extended in some strange ballet, under the wheeling dervishes of stars in the invisible twilight of summer.