

## **After Her Last Game**

by Carol Was

for Julie Ann

Players straggle to their cars, drag gym bags,  
bats, bases after the game under bright lights.  
Their voices trail off into the distance, muffled.

Air, still flecked with unsettled dust, swirls  
around the diamond. Number 13, our pitcher,  
ages out of this league in September. Now she

wanders back to her mound, eyes downcast. Silence  
slugs its way across the empty field beside her like  
a lost friend. She swipes her grass-stained knee, digs

cleats hard into the dirt the way she's done for ten  
years pitching, tosses her game ball from hand to mitt,  
back again, unsure as a compass needle quivering,

trying to find true north on this hot summer night.