

## Red Light, Green Light

by [Donna Pucciani](#) in the [September 2023](#) issue

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.