

## **stella for star**

By Hannah Dains

in the movie she leaves him.  
takes the baby, says “not this time,”  
takes the stairs as the music swells  
and she’s gone. easy as pie.  
easy as a broken bottle  
or a schoolboy. easy  
as seven-card stud.  
his fingers don’t find  
the opening of her blouse.  
there’s no murmuring.  
not like last time. how  
he called her name  
with heaven-splitting violence.  
and she slipped back  
down the stairs. no.  
different now. now  
there’s a baby to think of.  
and a sister gone, called  
away. and this isn’t  
hollywood, not at all,  
this is new orleans, baby,  
where no one says  
the bad guy gets punished.  
he gets his poker night  
and his baby all wrapped up  
in blue. and she goes back.  
she goes back.  
she goes back until it kills her.