

Bowling With Diane Keaton

by Collin Kelley

Friday night, 80s halcyon,
a memory of October bowling.
The suburban lanes loud
with kids and kinetic release
of balls slamming on maple.

I have no footwork, no sense
of release, fingers sweaty
in the grips, resin dropping
with a hollow boom
followed by derision
from more adept friends.

I remember reading
about bowler superstitions:
Lucky shoes, towels, and socks
or prayers and chants.
We'd just seen "Baby Boom" —
executive Diane Keaton
saddled with unexpected baby
altering her corporate ambitions —
and since Diane has been
good in everything forever,
I chose her.

On every approach,
perfecting my four-step,
under my breath —
Diane Keaton, Diane Keaton, Diane Keaton —
and the ball lightens, rolls straight,
connects dead center on the headpin,
then it's strike after strike all night.

Four decades flown, and I don't bowl
often, but Diane is still the mantra.
And when she dies, I find myself
in the supermarket aisle, doctor's office,
subway, watching hellish newscasts
— *Diane Keaton, Diane Keaton, Diane Keaton.*
A charm against the inconceivable,
the bowling gods giving and taking away,
another cursed split in a year full of gutters.

