

The first seven pregnant women I knew

JIM DANIELS

were teenagers. Some kept the baby. Entered
the desert of marriage, their childhoods
mirages wavering on whispered streets.

Others returned to school in old clothes
that didn't quite fit, and took to the hard stare
like needles to the vein. They stopped
going to dances. If they had any freckles,
they disappeared. They skipped
gym. They started or stopped
smoking. Teachers looked them up
and down.

Me, I turned away, I made
bad jokes, my little heart thumping
like a suicidal bunny. All I did was
hop hop hop down the echoing hallway.