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follow

That summer was over,
the one we sat four-around at a table damp with salt.

For me, the routine resumed as thirty summers before,
but for them, the end was something new.
That morning, they walked themselves to high school.

I could so easily, so quietly, so easily
have followed behind them to the big front door
or the flag pole, or the outermost ring,
where the grass is always mowed.

Unless following reaches that outermost precipice
where the earth gives over to water and all fall in,
someone must eventually turn around.
Turn around, I whispered to them, turn around.
But we all knew. They already had.