

Figure

Sarah McCaslin

"You better watch yourself with them boys.
That bathing suit ain't big enough to cover what it should."
Mother's voice, butterstick quick,
as the screen door slammed and my bare feet hit the back step.
"Where do you think you're going? I'm warning you!"—
as my legs parted the late summer alfalfa
between my so-called-home and the hog pond.
My toes splashed the cool, slimy bank and I saw the usual bunch:
Stinky (too afraid to jump in),
Lenny (taunting Stinky from the deep end),
Shock and Tim (skipping stones), and
Rob (sliding down the muddy bank)—
A congress of nobodies (school skippers, thieves, runaways,
hooligans).
I tossed my cutoffs to the side and ran into the shallow end,
deburred of my troubles.
I felt their eyes upon me and someone let out a whistle.
"Well, I'll be....."
"Look at what Liza grew!"
I came out of the water and spread myself
on the north bank to dry,
letting the moving grass cover insecurities
my bathing suit couldn't.