

SKINNY DIPPING WITH ST. ANTHONY

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In those early August days, your mother prayed
for everything she could not find: car keys,
a matching sock, one pearl earring, your father's lost job.
When she wasn't looking, you too disappeared,

mostly at dusk, when it was easy to get lost
to the lure of our favorite swimming hole,
where we stripped to our t-shirt tan lines.
I was still mostly boy, chest flat, thin buds

of breasts little more than pinched skin.
Late bloomer, my mother once said,
although I didn't know yet what was going to blossom.
You were a scrawny stick with sharp collarbones

and skinny shoulders, a medal of a dead saint
resting on a rope around your neck.
We pushed through cattails and thin cobwebs
that formed in evening dew, flicked away

waterbugs that seemed to skate above the waves.
Even when our teeth chattered in the cool air
and our skin puckered from the pinch
of the water, you never wanted to venture

toward home. You knew what you would find:
your mother, standing on the back porch praying
to St. Anthony, calling for him so loudly
we both thought for sure that God had a new name.