

Southern boy

1948: they fished me
from my mother's belly,
cut the cord,
while you were down
in North Carolina,
8 years old,
your character quite formed.
you were casting
your line far into the centre
of some hidden swamp,
skipping school,
and dreaming the day
never-ending,
remembering
the wages of sin.
and you were a pretty one
- weren't you? -
blue-gold eyes,
sunbleached hair,
and a voice heavy
and slow as the scent
of magnolia blossoms'
late-unfurling.
no wonder she was eager:
 girl cousin/
 boy cousin,
 failed connection,
 caught and beaten
 again . . .
ah, but one steamy day
we'll replay the scene,
sneak under a stranger's porch,
you can cup my ass
in your fisherman hands,
cast long and deep,
need never go home.

—Linda Pyke