

## swimming pool (disambiguation)

miracle thornton

i jumped and crushed my brother's mouth with my foot the blood  
like the spurt of lemon juice in water. my sister and i stirred  
organic cane sugar with a black spoon ice rattling in the jug. i  
brought the spoon to my lips and it tasted like chlorine.

i will choose a bikini black and white striped with eye-sore pink  
straps. in the store my mother's eyes will skate across my chest.  
i'll look down and see the dark stain of my birthmark on my right  
breast blown up. she'll asks me if it's right. i'll giggle yes  
then shrink as the receipt whirs out the register shrivel on the  
bus until my excitement sits pulped in my chest while the other  
girls wave their pale bottoms in the air whooping.

i go down to the pool in just my suit. it's a one piece the lump of  
my belly shrunk by the tight as skin black material. the cleaners  
sagged and keen watch me flit down the steps smoking. i  
smile at them as they tip their cigarettes with brown teeth. they  
watch me and i go delicate for them skipping over the vacuum

cleaner i'm sorry ma'am i'm sorry ma'am my mouth is made  
for pleasantries.

i will forget about my skin despite being so used to covering it up  
so used to wrapping myself in wool sweating clumps in the  
summer barely pulling up my sleeves to spit shine my wrists.  
we'll go into changing rooms. when i step out a stall the girls  
will ask me where my body comes from. in my head i'll tell them  
from somewhere wet out of my own piss sack somewhere so  
turbid you can't even see. we'll dress again after dissecting each  
other silently all told to stay clothed until we're ready to be  
submerged.

i lost my tooth and yellowed circled my sour new hole. i forgot  
about what used to fill the space until the water cooled around me  
and i was called in for lunch. i had fit myself onto my mother's lap  
to help her peel rinds flicked seeds into an unused ash tray  
only to be kicked off by the baby in her stomach. so i sat at her  
feet as my siblings sucked lemon skins for comfort. naturally i  
did the same then screamed.

in my head those yellow mouthed boys will brush thighs with  
me. unaware of whose limb belongs to who they will grab my  
stray ankle thinking i'm another girl or they will kick my  
ribs thinking i'm another scar skinned boy.

the room is all windows. as i swim i feel my hair breaking and  
floating around me the slip of the water over my well oiled skin.  
i dive and emerge to a man smoking rapping at the window of  
his truck plucking at his wife beater. there are many ways i want  
him to look at me something to tongue over something  
to bob in his fingers something to turn and turn until galled  
white. i suppose he can't see me whirl a rippled girl out of  
the corner of his eye or he may see nothing at all instead  
the glimmer of motel water dirty as expected.

i will try desperately to keep myself tucked in the right way i will  
not flutter my feet i will not splash i will not make an aggressive  
plunk into the deep end and show how unimpressive my form is i  
will not watch the others go straight and easy and noiselessly into  
the water i will not jealously cling to my own flaking meat  
thumbing the poor skin on my legs.

there's the real thing    my skin    how it broke from the crash of  
my heel to his teeth. i haven't apologized. i saw brown and thought  
it was my own reflection shrieking back up. still unaware of my  
own capacity    i shove    gratefully into whatever space i can fit.