**The Summer I Was 16**

**By: Geraldine Connolly**

The turquoise pool rose up to meet us,

its slide a silver afterthought down which

we plunged, screaming, into a mirage of bubbles.

We did not exist beyond the gaze of a boy.

Shaking water off our limbs, we lifted

up from ladder rungs across the fern-cool

lip of rim. Afternoon. Oiled and sated,

we sunbathed, rose and paraded the concrete,

danced to the low beat of "Duke of Earl".

Past cherry colas, hot-dogs, Dreamsicles,

we came to the counter where bees staggered

into root beer cups and drowned. We gobbled

cotton candy torches, sweet as furtive kisses,

shared on benches beneath summer shadows.

Cherry. Elm. Sycamore. We spread our chenille

blankets across grass, pressed radios to our ears,

mouthing the old words, then loosened

thin bikini straps and rubbed baby oil with iodine

across sunburned shoulders, tossing a glance

through the chain link at an improbable world.