

She Was Gelatin

by Mark C.

Rory, she had her top off in the water and I couldn't stop staring at her breasts, which were like my breasts in that they looked like teardrops but her collarbone was more pronounced. It didn't matter that she was topless, since it was dark and there were trees all around us and our car was at least a mile away, probably five miles from the closest town -- Yucaipa -- and it was so goddamn quiet aside from the cicadas (which were mating, of course, but that sound turns into ambient noise or white noise, depending on the person and the person's hearing). I almost broke my goddamn ankle walking the path to this pond, this pond that Walter said he knew no one else knew.

Rory, she splashed in the water and yelled, not true yelling but laughing a laugh that sounded like a yell. Walter didn't seem to mind: he placed his hairy hand on me, on a place that no one had touched without asking, but I didn't mind then -- I wanted it. This moment, it seems insignificant now, but it felt significant then. Or it didn't to them but it did to me. I thought we thought that we knew better, that this moment was a moment unlike another moment, but not different from others in that we'd have other topless-with-the-stars-around-us moments, moments like this one.

Rory, she still has the same teardrop breasts and now I want to write stories on her collarbone, stories about the pond we couldn't find on our own and stories about my orange bikini bottom and her purple bikini bottom at the bottom of her bed in her father's house, ones about the damp puddle of synthetic fabric and others of her body that moved like gelatin and her mouth that tasted like it, too.

Rory, she told me a few months ago, she told me it wasn't the moment that mattered but the pond, the pond that was ours in that moment. She's right because it was in that moment that I did want

Walter to touch me through my orange bikini bottom. Rory, she never minded if Walter touched her anywhere, never minded until she started to mind. I however, I did mind the other times, like the time in the passenger seat at the burger joint or in the dressing room of that thrift shop in Chino where I found the old wedding dress I still keep in the closet, but I let him go and I'd probably let him go now, too.

Rory, she wonders if Walter still lives around there. Hears the cicadas.

