

Swimming

by Mark Waldrop

You'd painted inside and I didn't know
The door knobs were wet.

You said when I was clean we could learn to swim,
And then I was treading water and you lifted
The rope like it took nothing
But your arm was tight and flexed.

In the deep end you showed me how to freestyle
Except you
Never put your face in.

You shook your head to breathe and I remember
droplets escaping your curls like they were flying
Scared away from what I thought would be just a moment.

"Let's see yours," you said,
After you'd hooked a thumb in your trunks.
And then a shadow of someone said no,
Fingers spread with a hand out, shaking his head, an older version
of you, maybe, with His
Grey perm.

I held on to the edge and kicked my feet.

