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The Summer Abyss

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The Summer Abyss

Caroline Calpin

I'm in my pink, floral one-piece swimsuit, sitting on a sprawled out towel. It protects me from the hot deck underneath. It reads "Polo Bear by Ralph Lauren." I study the bear's American flag t-shirt. I viciously rub my eyes that sting from the SPF 50 my mom lathered on me just moments before. When my hands leave my eyes I see the huddle of my older cousins in the distance. They are taking turns on the rope swing; each plunging into the cold lake water. I turn to my mom, who shakes her head in response. She doesn't have to speak for me to know her response: "You're too young." My eyes well up with tears, only making the sunscreen burn worse. My older cousin, in his Hawaiian print swim shorts rushes over, scoops me up, and tosses me off the dock. A shrill cry of surprise and laughter escapes my mouth as I hit the freezing barrier.

The sunscreen washes
away and is replaced with
a grin. Pure and wide.