

BRIGHT PINK TUBES

We swam in the quarry lake
that bloomed behind Savannah's house
overnight, awestruck with luck,
no other kids with a secret turquoise
opening but us, so we named it heaven:
jeweled our bodies with bright pink tubes
from Walmart, waded in Soffe shorts
like royalty, could smell the antimicrobial
mist from the Pamlico Animal Hospital
down the road—that sterilized church
splaying the first body I'd watch split,
neuter-ready, all pink. Or was it the oysters
that came first? Wrenched, grey organs
filtering our river of its phosphate clouds.
Gulped each sacrament down, the body
with its violence, the creek water too, blessed
by cows upstream. Plucked every sunfish
from the swamp thick enough, though
the last catch made Hallee fall straight in
that waist-high brown, and yes, the muck
an oily baptism. Ate the hare we rescued

from the road shoulder, tough strips,
lemoned, or the Dairy Queen softserve,
thin chocolate shell. All the same swirled
into a gleaming little death promise,
and when the river turned rageful,
we strapped our boogie boards to our ankles
and rode those swells all the way out
to the danger zone, hollering.