

Virgin Spring

by WS Gwynn

On a sticky dog day afternoon,
 I seek relief from the humid heat in the spring water,
 cloudy from the morning rain.
A long legged gray bird leaves his fishing
 and flies up into a tree.
 I regret misplacing him.
I drop my clothes on a bush and hold on to a limb,
 as I let myself down into the cold water.
I push out into the quiet spring
 and rest my nude bottom on a smooth rock.
 The heron's minnows nibble at my goose pimples,
 and soon the bird decides it is safe enough to fish,
 as I have become just another rock in the water.
I look down and see the reflections
 of the trees framing the clouds,
 reflections rippling like old window glass.
 I am taken back to the windows of my childhood
 in my great-grandmother's house
 and wish that house was still alive.
I wonder about the life of this spring,
 and how long will it be before a man builds a house here
 and misplaces the bird and me.
 I must enjoy the water now
 and hold its tranquility in my memory.
I've tried not to intrude on this place,
 to love the spring and its bird, undisturbed by me.
I've always grabbed at things I've loved
 and wanted them to stay still,
 so I could have them always,
 like the man who will build and fence here.
I regret the people I've let slip through my fingers,
 gone because I tried to grab them and keep them forever.
 They might have thought me a cage.
 If I had caressed them lightly, expected nothing,
 and grabbed at the experience rather than the person
 she might still be here,
 warm in my life,
 warm in this cold spring.