

EMILY BANKS

After the Pond

Stripping off the tight false skin
of a one-piece bathing suit
I'd kneel in the bathtub, repentant saint
spraying off soft particles of decomposing logs,

grass blades that lashed my legs
with sticky rough tongues that clung
by tiny perforations to my pores.
Lowering into the warm embrace

of clean water, I'd lie and wait
for all the unhuman to wash away:
miniscule shells of dead crustaceans,
sheath of secretions from a frog's egg sac

and that sweet smell of rot, of death
communal too strong to be mourned,
where animal and vegetable turn one
in deep brown musk.

And I'd step out soft-skinned as a child
leaving a train of silt to fill the drain,
toweling my body dry, gently
as though emerging from a grave.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emily Banks is the author of *Mother Water* (forthcoming from Lynx House Press 2019). Her work has also appeared in *Cimarron Review*, *Superstition Review*, *Yemassee*, *Free State Review*, and *Muse/A Journal*. Emily is a doctoral candidate and poetry lecturer at Emory University. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia. Online at emilyabanks.com.

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