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Derby Day

Sunlight mottles the muddied lake
Dotted with bobbers like freckles
On the ends of the long arms of men
Settled into a silent camaraderie,
Sitting on upturned buckets
Until some child makes a sound.
Then the men engage in their silent
Ballet of tying with hands and teeth,
Weaving worms onto hooks,
Casting, and settling the fishing rod
Into the hands of some child.
My father recalls our saltwater days
And all the mackerel we would pull in spring.
"None left," he says.
It is cold on the lake.
Then my father rises and beckons my daughter.
She should see her first catch:
A catfish thirteen inches long, old, and calm
As any man on this lake today.
My father and daughter pause for a photo,
Her baby hand and his large, freckled one wrapped round the line:
Here is our fish.it of body text