



PETER COVINO

THE WEIGHT OF WATER

For Art

What of the scraping, the abandonment
The nearly imperceptible sucking sound that type of mollusk makes
As it quickly multiplies,
Drains the life out of the lake.

Signs everywhere warn to scrub the bottom of oars,
Treat the boat with bleach, steel wool.
And what of the scraping, how reckless—
Heidegger might argue for a wholeness, the purity
Of worldly things, the drift and graft of the motion of water.
Incandescent sea-life & lake algae, nonetheless visible
 in opaque brownness.
Your splayed legs, frivolous enough, then three times the size
 in the reflection
Underwater. On the edge of the dock
An orange chair, empty now—sole sentinel
Such bright orange, sitting watch.

& soon another summer will pass
With all its loneliness and my closed-lip assurances
That you *won't* go blind at forty. And what of the freshwater fish;
That mad phenomena called feeding the lake, to attract tourists:
Trout-fed streams also nearby, fly-fishing with locally grown trout
 flies as bait,
No matter the catch has to be thrown back
Or else we too will glow from PCBs.

This morning our early morning swim at Cream Hill,
The town-lake beach, more a pond,



The dawn so still, you can just about hear the lid of the new
plastic garbage can
Being clawed by raccoons during the night,
Can-opener sharp in its edges: everything's redeemable.

The sun brightly, already yellowing the pond's surface,
Euphonious mix of mist and gnats.
How impressive the residue, the littered sand, the wrappers,
the brightly colored
Toys left along the shore, the perfectly folded-over blanket
& earlier your imprint in the bed as you trudged off
to make coffee
The alarm waking and not waking us
How remarkable that love can start again each day.

I'm having difficulty breathing
Though, you remind me,
It's probably my allergy medication that's off.
Your words and the smell of you linger . . .

Such fascination this day and this water holds for me,
in the hot dry sun.
I am thankful for everything
For the outhouse and farm animals of my youth
For this daily cycle of forgetfulness
For the cool afternoons in the eaves of the main church
Better than a tour guide's visit of San Lorenzo.

It's August and we're alive
Even if the compressor on the air conditioner
Isn't quite working right.