

Catching Crawdads

by: Samantha Lê

The days were still warm when I biked
down to the Mercado Latino for a piece of liver. You know
that place on Seven Trees with the *caliente* stock girl.
Back in those days—those sprinkler-jumping
summer days when I was twelve—
I could hear my entire Center Road neighborhood
right outside the window.

Kids kicked soccer balls in the street,
moms whispered stories on front porches (you know Delores'
old man took to that ugly green couch with a torch),
and dads waxed their Rivas on brown lawns,
talking about the good old days
when they were jocks
and ass-loving ladies men,
the Clovers played on my dad's tape deck ("I took my troubles
down to Madame Rue. You know
that gypsy with the gold-capped tooth.")

Yea, the days were still warm when I biked
to the Mercado Latino for liver. I took my rusted organs
down to Hellyer Creek—that place with the wild leeks.
I tied the liver to a string and waited
for the crawdads to sing. First my parents said,
don't eat things that eat meat; then they said, don't eat
things with faces that eat other faces.
So I lit firecrackers and stuck them
in the crawdads' claws; blew them up like *Jaws*.

Then one day, for no reason, I took the crawdads home,
rolled them in cornmeal and fried them up
like *chimichangas*. We sat around
that night laughing, sucking on their faces.