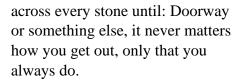
CAPTIVITY NARRATIVE

In the middle of the day, the vultures crown the lake above where you lie on the shoreline, your skirt knit full of sugar ants, the sweet of your skin seeping into the dry clover. You could almost be the old cow our grandfather pushed into the creek bed, released like a bluegill. Found later, split open, ribs like fingers. And didn't you know you were this—unidentifiable figure, redolent as meat, pickled in your own age, the salt of every meal expelled into droplets. It's the season for it, though, for lying still in a meadow while the clouds and birds festoon the sky, so that anyone could just imagine it being made for-made in the image of—where there might be a pasture beyond this, full of honeysuckle, where nothing tracks your slow progress into sleep, nothing scurries over your arms so small and dark—invisible world now suddenly open as a mouth or palm. Here you are: almost to the molar. Ripe. Isn't the land supposed to be here for you, to carry you home as your feet do your body, little by little: Plodding and smacking



"Captivity Narrative" is from Sara Moore Wagner's book Hillbilly Madonna and was first published in Nimrod.