

# Yalobusha Review

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Volume 5

Article 27

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8-1-1999

## Smoke; Green Swimmer

Sarah Maclay

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### Recommended Citation

Maclay, Sarah (1999) "Smoke; Green Swimmer," *Yalobusha Review*. Vol. 5 , Article 27.  
Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/yr/vol5/iss1/27>

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Sarah Maclay  
*Smoke*

I don't even touch myself  
this time, it isn't even that.  
a sudden shudder  
turns my body into a whip  
and I slam my face into flannel  
as if signaled,  
imagine kissing the bones  
at the base of your neck:  
soft, slow, my lips  
making a necklace  
on your skin.  
It doesn't matter  
that this could be grotesque  
to someone walking by, my thrashing  
with the invisible like a catnipped  
feline bent on dancing into the floor.  
I pause  
for the moment before my pelvis  
scoops the sheets.  
I can run.  
I can close my heart for several days,  
work with terrifying order and efficiency  
until I'm loosened  
like an undone blouse  
soaked in acres of rain, wet needles  
thick from the sky,  
water busting down in cords  
of redwood. Call it an obsession  
if it makes you feel more comfortable.

I call it the thing that always happens  
when the perfectly skipped  
rock strikes the pond.

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Sarah Maclay  
*Green Swimmer*

I plant myself in the midst of the crowd  
but I may as well fly through the room,  
gliding like the nude in this painting:

somewhere between the night sky and sea,  
bare, breasts exposed, back arched, legs apart, arms  
thrust back--away from my sides, buttocks muscles in gear,  
pushing forward, neck tilted upward as if reacting  
to a touch and I don't know if it's my chin  
hitting the ocean or being stroked  
by feathers or air and I'm so open  
I'm leaking. I cannot hide, all I can do is dive,  
sail, fall as though I'm going down a slide  
and it's metal, it's slick, it's slanted, it offers  
no choice over gravity  
or thrill

'til my heart grows bigger than desire. It cannot resolve  
circular equations: *I love him. I could love her.*  
It stretches until it's the size of my body,  
the size of this room, like canvas  
nailed to the ceiling, nailed to the floor,  
close to the ripping point.