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## SHANNON BAILEY

### Playing with Water

After supper, our mothers gossip  
together on the front porch, cigarette smoke  
swirling. Vicki and I pinch  
snapdragon blossoms for their secrets.

Our mothers have secrets of their own; passions  
wound tightly into pincurls under shower caps  
and secured with bobby pins.

Tonight they are fed up,  
fed up and bored with making ends  
meet. Their Black-Cat tobacco  
tins filled with quarters  
will not do. Vicki and I asking  
for licorice money  
"mommy please, mommy, mom please"  
will not do.

Yes! we are restless and jump about  
like brittle-legged grasshoppers  
in the heat. When the curfew siren  
wails as if there were a war  
in every house, we plot  
the bombardment of this town  
under the hot kiss of our mothers,  
sawdust sparks careening like tracer bullets  
from the top of the Beehive burner in Slaterville.

Shannon Bailey is busy working on a novella and a series of  
short stories through the Humber School of Correspondence.