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The Name of the Game Was Monster

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THE NAME OF THE GAME
WAS MONSTER

We played it like tag on our bunk beds.
The well water was sulfur and rotten eggs.

One girl: the monster.

Spiders congregated on webs we brushed away
with the backs of bare hands.

She picked top or bottom bunk.

Our *white trash neighbors* spit
phlegm-wads on the dock.

On the other bunk, the others huddled.

At the local party store, he bought a Milky Way.
The candy covered in a glob of maggots.

She tried to tag us with outstretched limbs.

The dock balanced on water-filled barrels.
A steel ladder, slick with neon green algae.

We screamed.

I didn't jump out far enough. My thighs
smacked against the splintered boards.

We scurried from her hands and feet.

Crumpled in a wheelbarrow, full of whiskey,
they pushed her along the edge of the road.

She yelled *switch*.

They buried a stray cat
up to its neck, used a lawnmower.

We dropped to the bottom.

Wild ash embers spit from split trees,
burnt quick holes in our blankets.

She climbed to the top.

Plastic beach chairs with shaky aluminum legs
collapsed, folded up around you.

If she tagged you, you became the monster.