

Ravenna Raven

## Fairview Lake

Several busloads brought us there  
from each district across the county.  
Ours kicked up dirt at the gate

and backed over a snapping turtle.  
The boys bent close enough to touch it,  
the trees were bursting with applause—

red-orange, ochre, burnt umber—  
the lake gleamed like a clean plate,  
and I could hardly get a word in.

Cabin Nine was full of skinny, pretty  
girls I didn't know yet. They spilled  
nail polish onto their mattresses,

mascara, brushes, tubes of cherry-  
flavored lip gloss, tampons, razors.  
One asked if I had a nickname

that was easier to remember. I unrolled  
the old sleeping bag Mother had  
found in the attic that smelled

like moth balls and molasses.  
A praying mantis turned its head  
in the dry grass and I could almost

hear it, rain coming down the mountain.  
That night we roasted two hundred  
marshmallows around the fire pit

and the chaperones tried to teach us  
to sing in unison. They carried pails  
of water in the silver moonlight

to pour over the ashes. It reminded me  
of something I'd done recently,  
but it was hard to know who'd listen

to that story—our teeth began  
glowing and even in the semi-darkness  
there was no way to tell us apart.