

Flood

And what do I have now that the water has gone?
When the city was submerged, all was quiet,

except for bullfrogs spilled onto the roads,
their throaty chorus, a song of displacement,

now muted by acres of muddied trees and Olmos Basin
filled with trash. The water has gone, leaving me thirsty

in a South Texas afternoon at a stoplight, eating exhaust
as heat rises in waves. This spot, under 10-feet last week,

was murky as the algae-laced Wisconsin lake I fished as a child,
where every June, my family unfurled. My mother

fried bacon, my dad drank too much, and we kids
ran barefoot and got ticks. Two weeks of ping-pong, a slippery pier,

bloodsuckers, and late-night fires. I don't remember thirst.
I remember the bubble of the Buick's rear window, the small cabin

swallowed by trees as we drove away for the last time
when I was twelve. My whole childhood could fit on the tip

of a lit cigarette. Or be carved on a turtle's shell
to sink and emerge for the next forty years.