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What Freedom

Jean Jones

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WHAT FREEDOM

JEAN JONES

The summer I turned skinny
I became free in my body for a season—
a dog allowed off the leash for the first time.
Timidly at first, and then proudly
hem lines rose as I became used to exposure.

I learned to saunter
and returned coy looks, glance for glance.
I thought I was and acted, too.
I stared in the mirror for hours in amazement,
and then in the arrogance of illusion.

Soon, my skin became raw, and a casual gaze burned
like molten gold
until I longed for my protective fat,
for the time eyes slid off my greasy body
to rest on smaller prey.

I remember now the glory of self abandonment,
of swallowing fear and self hatred,
feeling my body digest it, forcing it through my system.
I had stood safely encased in a body made of character
without physical dependence.