

Library of Congress

Poetry and Literature

[The Library of Congress](#) > [Poetry & Literature](#) > [Poet Laureate](#) > [Past Poet Laureate Projects](#) > [Poetry 180](#) > [Full List of Poems](#) > Poem 034

Print

Subscribe

Share/Save

Give Feedback

“The Summer I Was Sixteen” by Geraldine Connolly

Poetry 180: A Poem a Day for American High Schools, Hosted by Billy Collins, U.S. Poet Laureate, 2001-2003

[Back to Full List of 180 Poems](#)

Poem 034

Rights & Access

The Summer I Was Sixteen

The turquoise pool rose up to meet us,
its slide a silver afterthought down which
we plunged, screaming, into a mirage of bubbles.
We did not exist beyond the gaze of a boy.

Shaking water off our limbs, we lifted
up from ladder rungs across the fern-cool
lip of rim. Afternoon. Oiled and sated,
we sunbathed, rose and paraded the concrete,

danced to the low beat of "Duke of Earl".
Past cherry colas, hot-dogs, Dreamsicles,
we came to the counter where bees staggered
into root beer cups and drowned. We gobbled

cotton candy torches, sweet as furtive kisses,
shared on benches beneath summer shadows.
Cherry. Elm. Sycamore. We spread our chenille
blankets across grass, pressed radios to our ears,

mouthed the old words, then loosened
thin bikini straps and rubbed baby oil with iodine

across sunburned shoulders, tossing a glance
through the chain link at an improbable world.

—Geraldine Connolly

POETRY180

About the Poet

Geraldine Connolly (1947-) is the author of three poetry collections, including *Hand of the Wind* (Iris Press, 2009). Connolly was born in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

Learn more about [Geraldine Connolly](#) at The Poetry Foundation