

We Disappeared

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We played games in green yards,
hid from each other in the low, sprawled pecan branches,
buried ourselves in monkey grass and hedges,
lay down in oceans of black-green ivy
and leaped back up,
feeling the soft feet of furry spiders and slick-skinned skinks.
We chased chameleons
across peeling white rails of massive front porches,
watched them bulge their pink bubble necks
in sexual splendor
then leap after one another into the bushes,
disappearing into brown and green,
into leaves and twigs that lay suddenly still
or scurried on tiny reptilian claws.
We battered the grey paper nests
of red-black wasps
with the long, brown stems
of fallen bamboo trees
and ran screaming from the angry clouds,
then cautiously returned,
poked at the fallen nests
and crushed the blind, wriggling larvae
with rocks,
crushed them as they struggled blindly
from their fallen paper wombs.

We chased snake doctors through the creek bank kudzu,
caught the little monsters,
half dragonfly — half butterfly,
and held them by their satin black wings
or their dark green tails
and threw them back into the air again.
We played until darkness came
and tiny bats staggered through the air,
chasing hard, brown beetles
that threw themselves against window screens.
We ran after lightning bugs,
caught them in our hands
and threw the light at one another
or waited for the lemon-green glow
then pinched the little bug in half,
smeared his lantern onto our shirts
and ran away into the dark
like green glowing comets
racing across the warm, heavy sky
until our shapes faded into the dark
edges of the trees,
the dark ends of green yards,
the lantern gave out
and we disappeared from sight.

