

girl/woman

i ran. i skipped. i played hopscotch
and prayed. i jumped rope,
jumped through hoops—
bigger than the ones in my ears.

i fell down. i was a wide-eyed mess,
half-grown and shamed on bleeding knees,
praying to become a woman—
to outlive Marilyn—
to out-look my mother.

i ran—into you. we
sipped scotch, i laid down—
a slam, a slur of southern slang.
oh! to be a woman unashamed—
fearless, flawless... braless.

i fell—for you. it was late
but so was i— your flame to claim
who runs and plays, and prays—
for other days, for bleeding knees.

Rachel K. Corell