Those Summer Days

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Indian brave
Face smeared in blackberry warpaint
Slinks about the forest discards
Of moss-rotted logs
And leaf blob monsters
Present at the quagmire’s edge.

He preys upon an elusive hunt:

Sun-baked bullfrogs
Basted in slime and swamp ooze and
Grinning with
Key-holed eyes
Gazing endlessly from the murky shore.

Letting loose a bold warcry
The warrior lunges forward
Becoming one with mud and muck
While amphibian struggles
To see sunlight again.

Filth caked hunter staggers to his feet
Badges of sand and dirt
Smeared haphazardly across both cheeks
Signify the honor of his triumph
For seizing the slippery creature.

A shapeless thrashing clump
Caged by two hands
Is promptly rinsed to be rid of sediment
But held carefully
Restrained
Then shoved into a gritty jean back-pocket.
Proud man and wary beast trek back
To concrete trail and copy-cat houses
Whereupon an indian princess
Of beauty, grace, and kindness
Greets him on the blacktop path
With a rosy dimpled smile.

Thrusting mighty hand in pocket
Hunter pulls forth the conquered prey
Bug-eyed and
Still grinning
Its forearms resting armchair style
Upon thumb and pointer
While legs dangle lazily
Bright with ivory skin.

Indian brave
Left standing
Together with startled critter
Is puzzled
As to why
His indian princess
Screamed
And ran away.

April Anderson