Even Now, I See

Wayne Johnson*
Even now, I see

We crouched, my sister and I,
hands poised
for the quick thrust
into the luke-warm
water, grass and gooey mud.
And that ditch-side water,
so warm and smelling of last year's cropped lawns,
oozed around my toes
in my high-topped
Keds.
She smiled at me
with those silver braces on her teeth,
pulled back her pony tail and
pointed to the rippling water at my feet.
I could see his eyes,
little black-centered bronze marbles,
gliding on the surface
of the drainage ditch puddle
like marsh-gas bubbles.
Then splash!
And I searched wildly in that
tepid water, feeling snails,
hard little twigs, papery leaves.
trying to connect,
grasp without breaking,
that elusive, slippery swimmer.
And finally, clenching between
thumb and index finger
a jerking, slick leg,
I had one.
Woosh! And I pulled
out of the water
a smiling,
shining,
metallic green and brown
frog,
staring, like me, out of wondering eyes.