

A Rural Substitute

for the string quartet

David J. Roman

in collaboration with

Rosa Swartz

Woman in the Pool:

October Mountain, Massachusetts

By Rosa Swartz

Her lungs rattle the sky,
swimmer held by lake-
branches, bare seed pods,
temporary chandeliers.

White wrinkles form
Below a broken yolk of sun.

Her study in the stubble of the
underbrush:
a peely spectrum, crawfish to
fingertip.

The day begins to lose sight.

Skull of moon-wane,
the choir of worker bees
hymn above the boardwalk.

Woman in the Pool:

State Forest, Grayling, Michigan

By Rosa Swartz

She sneaks into drowning:
practice kisses rise as steam,
beauty marks float in the shallows.

Her mouth speaks swamp grass
under the mended shell of moon,
unripe pears fall by the dozen,
impatient as seagulls, as hailstones.

Woman in the Pool:

Sunset Highway, Oregon

By Rosa Swartz

Hip-deep in pond flowers,
Water towers sunken roadsides.

Sparrows clog the river beds,
produce markets go extinct.

The map shifts as she rides:

at the shore, a house of sticks,
a minnow with no tail bone.
Truth-teller at the dam--
No thieves allowed.

She grips vacant buildings like
railings,
rainfall thick as motor oil.

Her mattress holds only blankets,
maps the distance between *was* and
is.