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## Alligator Swimming Past

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Charlotte Pence

## **ALLIGATOR SWIMMING PAST**

A green-black nub breaks  
the bayou's brackish skin.  
A piece of wood to overlook—

until it moves. The back  
now rises into being  
like a mountain range.

This is the way the world  
forms itself: from nothing  
to a broiling something

that glides in toothy silence  
past my kayak toward  
its muddy bank of dented grass

and clicking tips of wild rice  
where red-winged blackbirds  
dip, and turtles cleat higher on

their log as the gator, like  
the rest of us, locks in  
on thoughts of what's next.