

POETRY

JOHN ALLISON

About to Take the Plunge

Afterwards she seemed to linger,
asking questions you had
answered earlier. So you put on

Tristan und Isolde, an old
disc, the *Liebtestod* with scratches.
You wanted that heroic pose

*but you've tried out
all the myths*

*before the mirror
and they do not fit*

It was the painting: *Woman
by a Forest Pool*. For this
she came. Afterwards you stood

before the easel, thinking
it was you. But as she turned
at last to leave your studio,

she simply had to reach out.
To touch the paint, feel
her fingers slip into deep waters



Georges Seurat, *Café Concert*, c. 1887.
Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.