

WHERE THE GIRLS ARE

Above the river the great blue heron
is graffiti reflected in the neon lettering
puddled in pools against the muddy edges
I used to walk, years ago in my father's leather jacket

stiff like the train tracks beside the river, laundry
lapped sleeves disguising themselves as waves, fifteen
thousand work shirts un-ironed, left for the layering
of a bird's nest in waiting. There are no fish at this shore.

My best friend's mother was a prostitute; I didn't know.
My father told me she asked him once if he
and his friends would like to party with her and her

friends, the ones she worked with at Second National Bank, the building
she took me to and let me and her daughter stand in the fourteenth floor
window, close enough to be a handshake or someone's favorite color.

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