

## Majestic Prayers of Bangor

When a girl likes a boy in Bangor, Pennsylvania  
She's got to talk to him just right. As if she cares for the boy  
As little as she cares for Bangor's dark and busy taverns—

The Red Geranium, Five Points, the Richmond Hotel—and its boys  
At the scarred oak bar who turn into men who look exactly  
Like her father. So she speaks as if she's leaving this slouching town

The first chance she gets—with or without the boy—though she knows  
(As if taught from first grade on or maybe just somewhere in her bones)  
That she's not going anywhere unless you consider ten miles to Pen Argyl

And Majestic Garment Factory someplace. People here do.  
But Majestic, where her wide-hipped mother has worked since '87,  
Has never been remotely regal—just sheet metal and machines that hum.

So, god, our girl prays—not an on-your-knees-your-hands-folded sort of prayer  
But a tooth-gritted-cry-every-day-you-wake-to-these-slate-skies.  
And as she prays, she closes her eyes and sees the boy driving south

Through Flicksville. Both his hands tight on the wheel. His knuckles white hills.  
Worried that if he begins to let go, the car will turn around on its own.  
Take them both back to the duplex on Ott Street. And our girl, she hems

Herself tight against the boy's side. Her hand locked to his thigh.

