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## River's Edge

Robin Ray

The ocean's antics, feeding her estuary, shopworn  
by now. Prolific vapors eddy through the Fata  
Morgana, attracts tsunami rats, the recently homeless  
in search of a home. Tribes of retirees, former county  
candidates, also flock to the river's vaulted banks, rills  
of digestible slogans in the Chamber of Commerce's  
brochure floating through graying swagger.

A young dulcinea, grotesque holidays of the beach on  
her six, perches on the bank, her naked feet swirling in  
the bath, creating anchors with polished toes. Trafficked  
through stubborn landmines, penetrated the wattle and  
daub of the forest getting there, to contemplate at length  
the peace of her employ. Ravenous tariffs altered the  
boss's complexion from festive to maladroit, a chainsaw  
lumbering through the hoi polloi in painful pink slips.

The river is a nymphet of violent curves, a runaway  
lioness, refuses to be held. Boorish galaxies have tried.  
*Picadores* darted barbed, decorated, *banderillas* into the  
muscles of her neck. *Toreadors* laughed at her inseverable  
arteries. She won't be tamed. Cardinal flowers pay homage  
to her liquid frontier, deign to trespass where cattails rule.