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Behold

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Alison Pelegrin

BEHOLD

It bubbles to the top—flotsam—how dad
picked over ballast and hunted parking lots
for stones that almost matched, flat stones
to skip across the river from wherever
he happened to stand on the levee.
Our spot was never the same place twice
and neither was the Mississippi,
pushing back against walls that forced
it into shape. Dad could be rough,
yanking my head in the direction
of what he found worthy of beholding.
He'd get disappointed, almost angry
when I couldn't follow his aim,
and it was easiest to go along, pretend
I'd caught sight of whatever it was—
refinery fires, horse rearing on the levee's crown,
clover frothing in the freight train's wake.