

Spoken

The men would throw their empty cans of beer
upstream, then shoot them as they bobbed and pitched
along. Pabst Blue Ribbon. Coors. Those strange names
spoken as often as my own. The names

all sank, riddled with .22s, or else
were blown clear from the water by shotgun
blasts, landing halfway up the farther bank.
Two thousand acres leaning in to hear.

A few more years I'd come to sink my own name,
leave home, read thoughts and prayers unlike I'd heard,
forget those rants and curses, glass-eyed stares
and late-night raids on others' fields for deer.

Some other world revealed itself, now speaks
so quietly

I hear no other voice.