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A Requiem for the Me Decade

Alida Moore

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You told me later, when you were about to marry
a man, that you weren't sure who you were back then.

As if that sort of uncertainty were something original,
and not part of those years, not part of all

of us who were stuck being teenagers stuck
in the middle of the 1970's stuck singing

along tunelessly to the tuneless tunes
of Barry Manilow stuck by a fluke of time

marching in brassy school bands playing
Eres tu, If, and *The Hustle* over and over and

over again while that year's pastel-covered homecoming
beauties and beaus found their place on the field

right in front of mom and dad's Polaroid. This
was us, instead of moving in protest and riot, this

was us, this insidious brew of insularity and bad taste.
The Ford Administration seemed to speak for the lot

of us, with a message mostly vague and clumsy. Yet,
I believe that we were all secretly dangerous, all

secretly subversive, all would-be wanna-be criminals,
every single one of us a serious flight risk

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like Squeaky whom we cheered for and prayed
for upstairs at night behind our bedroom doors.

In the morning we made our beds and straight A's.
We were terrified of our passionlessness.

You know I am right. And that it was
that dark freedom of female fire, that first

blessed chance for mortal sin, that you and I
were really looking for the year we became lovers.