



## Perfect Pitch

I rode middle school-bound  
in the back seat of my aunt's station wagon  
listening to her and mama sing "Jolene,"  
trading verses, harmonizing the chorus,  
*I'm begging of you please don't take my man!*

A few years later it was "9 to 5."  
They were fired up and it was Dolly's doing.  
This was rural Ohio, the bottom lip  
of Northern Appalachia,  
right shy of Perry Como country.

The women in the family worked  
the TS Trim factory, spitting out  
Honda car parts. Started out  
on the assembly line, worked their way  
up to paint, then detailing, then welding.

The physical labor made their bodies strong,  
their future bright and like Dolly,  
they weren't taking any shit.  
They learned early on about strikes and picket lines,  
how important it was to organize and vote.

Brave women in the work force determined  
to see their daughters inside college classrooms,  
the hell out of factory row.  
I didn't know then that I was being raised  
by a feminist, taking back her power.

Like Dolly, my mama would never use that word,  
no matter how much she embodied it.  
She was proud to hang up her welder's helmet  
end of shift, pick up her paycheck, sing in the front seat  
of a station wagon with women she loved.