

# *The first seven pregnant women I knew*

JIM DANIELS

were teenagers. Some kept the baby. Entered  
the desert of marriage, their childhoods  
mirages wavering on whispered streets.

Others returned to school in old clothes  
that didn't quite fit, and took to the hard stare  
like needles to the vein. They stopped  
going to dances. If they had any freckles,  
they disappeared. They skipped  
gym. They started or stopped  
smoking. Teachers looked them up  
and down.

Me, I turned away, I made  
bad jokes, my little heart thumping  
like a suicidal bunny. All I did was  
hop hop hop down the echoing hallway.