

Swaying on This Articulation Until We Slow

by Michael Seidel

Early summer, wet, with the sun just coming up, I'm standing on the articulation between two trains looking out at the outskirts of Pittsburgh. The only industry left here seems to be a swallowing greenness.

Outside this morning there's the kind of wind that can take your teeth off.

I've left her in the sleeping car, her book over her face like a sleeping mask. She left me at an earlier sunrise over the Grand Canyon, however many states and days ago that was. We were hanging our feet over the lip. A volleyball had broken her finger back in high school. Beyond the nub of calcified knuckle, the tip always angled to an unfixed left. But on sitting on that edge, she pointed with the stark accuracy of a theodolite to a depth where even the mules refuse to go.

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Week of Fire. That was the book she'd been reading. In Nebraska, I looked up from the flatness, to her face, then down to the page and saw this: *Real people have joy.*

When she dozed off, I reached over, and used my pencil to change "joy" to "the flu."

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I'll remain swaying on this articulation until we slow enough that I can jump off without breaking my thigh. I want to live the rest of my life like a prairie dog, standing thin and tall on my hind legs in a dry grass field, my arms out in front of me like I'm ready to accept any weight that falls from the sky.

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I've already forgotten more about remembering than most people will ever know.

