

DIVING OFF THE BROAD CREEK TRESTLE

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Standing on a rotted beam that straightarms
the Broad Creek trestle, I watch,
terrified, while the train flies west,
so close even the breastworks tremble
as the beast jolts and grunts by.
My eyes open wider.
I scan the creek bed full of rocks,
my buzzard-grip slowly slipping.

Smoke snorting, the train charges straight
for a pre-destined patch of roofs.
It will only stop long enough
to swallow a different generation of red-eyed,
feverish salesmen before it hugs the old road,
crashing through the bellowing green.
Each clank, carom,
of the hot steel against the sagging oak
invites me to reach for the passing ladders,
compels me to swing up,
plop down into the cozy velvet armchairs
where I would dissipate the club car gin
and wrestle in the womb of the sleeping cars.
But the wind holds me back.

The creek below gurgles and belches,
forcing me to judge its rise and fall.
My nostrils flare Masai-like
as I dive from my perch.
My head strikes my surface face.
It sucks me under in one greedy gulp.

Churning my way to the rocks, I drag myself belly down
like a snake in the sun and rest. My left eye cocks
to watch the caboose lumbering behind,
rusted yellow, and I know
it's a blistered sore
on a lizard's tail.