

LISA WELLS

1989

Roused on the isthmus dividing eastbound
and westbound, launched from the grill
of an '86 Cutlass, wicked knot throbbing

on my crown. I remember the driver
swerving. I stood absolutely still. Ascension
omitted. That frame's been clipped

along with the wire joining
input and animal fear. It was
the year I attempted to defect

to the lion enclosure, stuck neck-deep in the bars
the pride stirred, rose upon their haunches.
25 years they've stalked from shade

in my mind's eye. *What a difference a foot makes*
notes the near-death recidivist,
budded to the edge

of the subway platform.
When the ravening out of darkness speeds
and the bad star advances in the channel

one eye looks inside, one away.
To step or lapse to the flesh?
No one is coming

to slather my head in margarine
and slip me back to my keeper's hands.