

JOSHUA REED STUART

Riding the Train

Renewal is a perpetual action on commuter trains,
where broken families coalesce,
where the daughter mourns the grandfather
that did not hear her goodbye.

In answer to "I" there is infidelity, and the alphabet is a game
anyone can play, anyone can employ
to divert the child's attention.

The father does this.

The mother does this.

The mother bangles her wrist with an amethyst bracelet.
It falls from her slender arm when the leftover crumb of a man
that calls himself a father talks.

The tinkling sound is nightmare etched in air.

I am also looking for "J." The word is there:

jewelry.

I want to tell the girl,
point to the thrift store's window sign.

She wants to skip "J" for "K"
to forget all about "J," about jealousy, about jewelry,
about joie de vivre, about jilting.

The girl wants to find "K."

Knowledge is the first word to mind. The girl gives up.
Though thought has taken hold of her and for the rest of her life
she will search for "K" or "L" or go back to looking for "J."