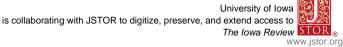
First Snow · Jonathan Holden

All night, while we were absorbed, our home was being transported somewhere else, toward here where we woke as travellers staring out a train window at the abstract term that might once have been a lawn. We don't know where we are going. And I think we are almost as glad as our children. who don't care but are simply amazed that what they had memorizedthe stance of a swing-set, the faithful postures of treescould have been translated so far yet put down again here so gently, without error, here in exactly the same arrangement as where they had lived before.

I hardly believe anymore in trains—only the lost trains that Tolstoi's lovers meet, coming from and returning to life in the country, those sad black engines shedding steam like the breath of the patient horses that wait, aiming the troikas, mute witnesses. And certain American locomotives like muscular elegies parting a few sparse flakes,



imperial and hell-bent as classic fullbacks hurling out of tunnels, leaning heroically into curves while inside, where it's all confidence, some Babbitt and his fellow drummers dab their lips with fresh linen and, as we do now, look out with approval on the comfy snow. I don't know how we got here or if this place, this morning that is so groundless, so lost yet like some place we have been before is the place I need. Where we are is new.