

The Body

in the dream I wake to a poem about trains what it
is that insists that crawls clamors the win-
dowpane clasped shut against a wind outside bare
branches in a dry heave & I rise over the swelling
resolution not to rise I rise consider the
light switch consider the electric blanket warmth
I rise instead go to the window which is no longer
a window but a box full of moonlight & down there
in the meadow just a handful of starspecks in the
foxglove her hair is blue grass & the first thing
I think of are the wet walls of howe caverns that
tourist trap back east the pipe organ the bridal
altar the river styx stalactites & stalagmites fus-
ing the slow settle of limestone bicarbonate
a blind bat on a billboard unfurling leather wings
unfurling night unleashing a gust of supersonic
transience an old dog's call to supper *twenty
miles to go fifteen get your wallet ready* &
there it is again the unmistakable whistle the
bleating the bleeding the letting off of steam
& she's by the tracks with something in her hands a
silver shining thing & through the silent distance
through the square hole in my bedroom wall I know
there's nothing left to call it but hope though it's just
a quarter a nickel a dime general wash-
ington's hope your twenty-five cents worth of
hope a handful of gum balls a plastic egg full
of costume jewelry that would stain a tiny finger green
it's just the sedimentary the sentimental dream
token hope the hope you go to hell the hope
you forgive me the hope you remember to hope at
least love & she sets it down on the far track
as if dropping her hope into the cool slot of a juke-
box the low clink clambers up from inside my
throat as she steps over both tracks over
the shimmering shining thing over the glittering flut-
tering tumbling turning thing now lifting at its edges
the thing that's always more than whatever it is
because there's the whistle again the rumble
a distant thunder because the past can't hold the
future the present rumbles on *five miles almost
there hush now* it sweeps past two geo-
metric lines that never touch & there's the lamp-
light the steamstack the hot metal glow &
at her heels this unnameable sadness this bur-
den the eternal space there between the train's first
passing & the wind that follows a second later
to wake the body from its only available dream

Timothy Green

