We always knew when the train was coming. Even before we heard the low rumble and the screeching signal, we could feel the tremors in the ground, rising up through our bare feet and legs, goosebumps standing on edge. Usually, we'd be outside, soaking up the last few hours of the torrid summer sunshine. Sometimes, though, we'd be on Grandma's screened-in porch, sitting tightly in the stiff white wicker furniture, sipping iced tea or lemonade or Diet Coke for Bridget, because once she was diagnosed with diabetes she had to limit her sugar intake. We would sit with our restless limbs and our sun-kissed skin, waiting for the first one of us to sense it to jump up with a start and scream, "It's coming!" We'd be out of our seats in an instant and out the cracked screen door, always letting it bang shut even though we were told not to every time. We'd race across the lawn, bare feet slamming parched grass until we reached the edge of the cliff at the end of the yard, where the dense overgrown shrubbery threatened to trespass on my grandma's meticulous lawn. There, we would wait for the steel beast, staring at the tracks below, watching the boats float serenely across the Connecticut river that seemed just out of reach.

When the train passed by, I always imagined I could see people looking out the window, even though the train was often a freight train that held no passengers. I'd focus my eyes as hard as I could on each car, trying to soak in as many details as I could take in. I wanted to know where the trains were going and for how long, and I'd