

If any pastoral image feeds on the holes gorged inside it, then why do we think the rain will not seep and soften the roof long after we've forgotten how to stop its leaks. Small things, smaller now and out of reach but still we wonder about shelter. In this photograph, grandmother in her nightgown smokes a cigarette by the window—in another, she looks out an old telescope on the back porch. Still wreathed in such a gown. Catching the hem of an unearthly gleam. What can she see just now, from that distance. In the hereafter. In summer heat. Radio static. How we only speak across miles and miles of dead zones stretching toward the vanishing point. Everything dissolves then, the windshield before the history of the Corn Belt. Now do you feel the rain coming down. In sheaths of sateen and white lace. Do you remember bone. The cat flicks its tail in smoke. A train heaves on down the tracks