

Novgorod Sidings

Virtual snow on the line, a starry
damask night, the train quits
the virtual station. Wellwishers
gather on the cinderpath, not knowing

how to say goodbye. Passengers
with tall hats in half windows alight
in the opening pages. A red signal
power-cut lasts an entire chapter.

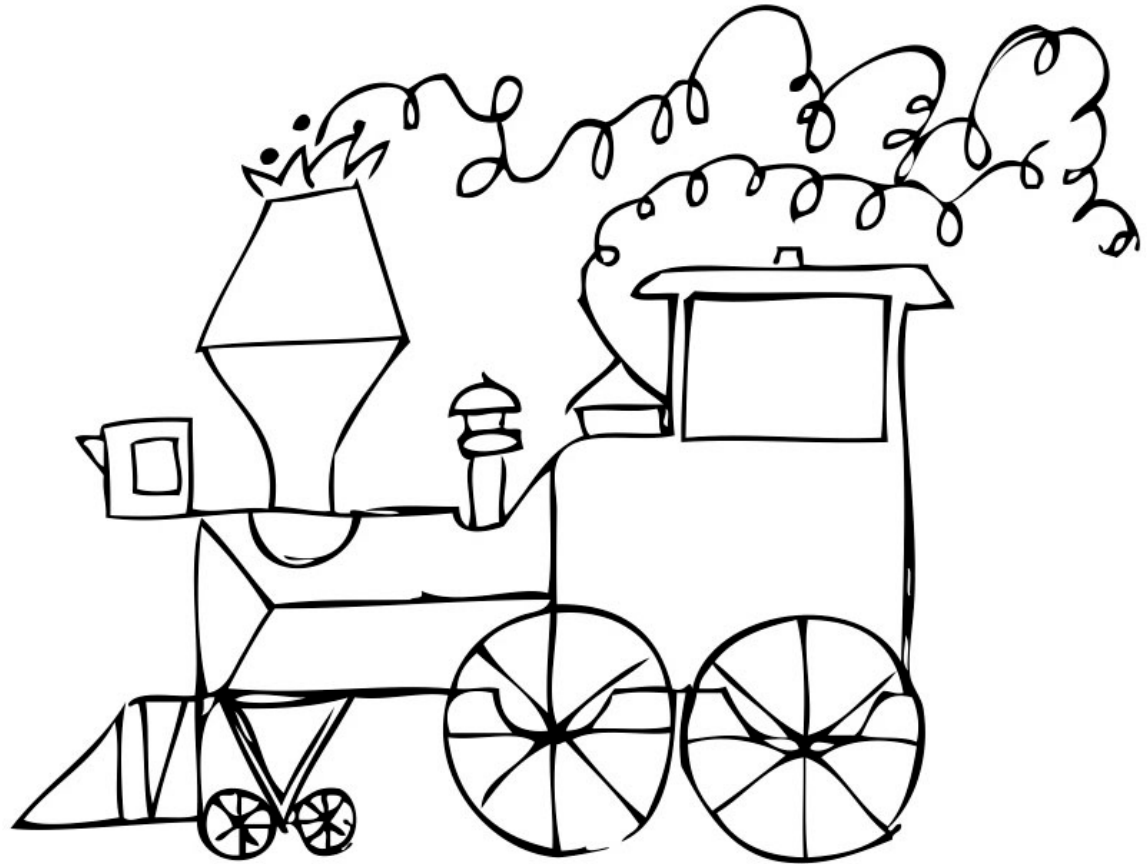
But the couple ring true; emerge from
lost strands. There is grey in her hair
now, cologne hangs in the lull
of stale compartments. Destination

their long-shut summer-house. He carries
her portmanteau in one hand, an octave
mandola in the other. No need
of words. Luggage racks cleared

super-car mantles cooling. Unlit
factories, grain-stores, mosques dissolve
in the filters of darkness, past telegraph
poles, a lone traveller on a snow-stormed

bridge, isolated railroad hostels.
He notices she's lost an earring, one freshwater
pearl. A running motif. The rest is non-
linear and poorly focused. The engine

slows at the first tunnel, erases carriage
after relentless carriage from the frame.



—Anne-Marie Fyfe, from *Understudies: New & Selected Poems* (Seren Books, 2010)


BROADSIDE

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