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Figures Waiting At A Station

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FIGURES WAITING AT A STATION

You ride the 6:03 to the last station
where a short man in pantaloons steps out to
meet you, takes your suitcase & hat.

The two of you, as the sun drops over
a shed wall, exchange clothes. His pantaloons,
too small, ride your hips like

jodhpurs; your slouching trousers lap
behind him as he shuffles away, disconsolate,
a red figure carrying packages

against the sunset. There remain for you
nearly two hours till the next coach
& the Coca-Cola machine is busted,

blinking by a wall. In that time, while
a man calls off numbers, there will
be a woman in smudged peach lipstick cutting

columns from the leaves of a paper. There
will be an overhead humming fan
coated white with dust, turning, like

velvet blades to complement your
costume. You will content yourself to lean
against a wall. Your shoes will pinch. Outside,

miles off, your train will just be clearing
a rise, gaining speed. A brakeman whose
weathered face glances from the slotted

side window will be absently unwrapping
a sandwich, smelling the newmown
fields racing into the dark, the first stars.