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Her Problem of Gravity

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HER PROBLEM OF GRAVITY

Dressed all in yellow despite her pale skin, Isabella coming slowly down the hillside, white umbrella overhead, thick punch the sun. It is mid-July in the mid-Midwest. No rain for days. There are swallows humming circles overhead, tracing a slipstream she will try to enter into, never find her way out of. The streets below are mostly vacant: some garbage, some couples, Alessandro sweeping and smoking in front of his Italian café. Old men hawking chaw toward the cracks in the sidewalk, talking the weather. Mostly not talking. Isabella is a bell, a ringing in the bones. She is broke stone silent. Coming down from the timber, counting out boxcars, fingering the hem of her blustering skirt. There is solitude in knowing. A depth one can swallow. There is no rain for days. Crumbled in key places, the streets mostly marrow. As in every small moment in every small town, a child loses grip of the only balloon. There is sadness in the alders and life in the water. The sun did not rise in the morning. Will not ever set, ever. This is scientific fact, and yet. The trains move only at midnight, hauling grain across the veins of American progress, built of course by Chinese slaves, now tightrope-walked by children on their way to the sewage lagoon. The mission: unknown, but there is always destination. Which leads us back to Isabella and her yellowing gravity. The pull of the earth upon those who found heaven, covered in weeds, choked in wildflowers.