She Took Off Her Wings And Shoes
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The train passes different colored sailboats on the river. Some are arranged together, some stand alone beneath steep overhanging cliffs. My nephew hides behind my sister’s legs when I go to meet them. He comes down the stairs after a bath, his hair parted on the side. His younger brother barely notices us and only cries out for the essentials. When I catch his eyes, he giggles.

The woman sitting next to me on the train holds a small radio to her ear. I hear the announcer droning on and on. Light through the windows at Grand Central Station, we glide right over the river.

Eddies and pools spread outward. Cutouts of moviestars are propped up at the video store. I watch *Lady and the Tramp* with my nephew. Part of a castle rises out of the small island. Bases of its ruined moat surround it. Water pools out on the bathroom floor at the train station. Trains’ departures and arrivals flash up on the screen, letters flip up onto the screen or disappear behind blinds.

My sister tells me she had an abortion and will be going for a follow-up visit. What was missing, the dog with half her face white, the other half black, the jade-colored bird who sat on my sister’s shoulder and flew through her hair. The worst part, she said, was waiting in line all day and being last.

My brother-in-law takes food off his son’s plate, and his son gets out of his chair furiously. He holds the flashing gun in my face. The rented video tells the story of a girl raped in a bar. The men pin her against a pinball machine and fuck her. My nephew and I watch Wile E. Coyote chase the Road Runner. It feels right to be running from the taxi to my house in a thunderstorm. Sewage treatment plants, the Bronx, cliffs border the river. My brother-in-law spins his son around until he goes from crying to laughing.

My sister drives us from the train station across Jersey flats, past Wawas, farmlands. He holds his head back after a spoonful of
food and gurgles. The red-haired girl sleeps on the train, a book held in her hands. The ballerina dances by leaping through the mirror. A piece of the mirror juts out of her abdomen. My nephew's hand rests in mine at the store. We practice pressing our faces up against the netting of the playpen to make faces. He comes running out of the bathroom with his pants down and stops dinner conversation. In the home video of my sister taking the baby home from the hospital, she strokes his face over and over, her back to the camera. I stroke his blond/red hair, his/her/my brown eyes look back at me. He recognizes himself in the videos. He says good-bye cheerfully. The Hudson is full of summer as it carves the rocks.