6. FOURTH OF JULY

Leaving the Esplanade after the fireworks
we follow paths along the dark glimmering river,
willow and water shadows wound with human figures.
Hot blankets and baskets, thermoses, folded umbrellas
slow-poking the night ground. Heat now bearable.
Red Line trains arrive above us at Charles Station:
window squares of lighted faces, heads like party
balloons loose on the ceiling, arms like hooks into meat.

On the lawn before Fiedler and the Pops, a young woman
in a white dress waited for her lover. She was reading
a book. When she lifted a knee, I saw she wore
nothing under . . .

At the foot of the ramp, we break through
metal barriers, up a stairway to the platform.
A red rear light follows us across the river.

7. THAT HAT

Merely because I left you on a cold first
of January and flew away South again,
to my life again—a tall man in a gold
party hat singing drunk in the seat beside me
Auld Lang Syne, his clothes smoke-rank
and sour with champagne, and as I rose
in a cold white cloud, the engines hurling me
into new time, new space, all I could see
on the window was your face at the gate
cold and small in your white fur hat,
my lips breathing the soft fur of your hat,
whispering how I loved you, how I’d always
love you, knowing even then, merely
because I left you, you would think I lied.