

Ghost to San Francisco



They had gotten off at the last stop. Why hadn't she spoken louder? The tickets felt greasy in her hand. She had her eye on the clouds outside. The white shined through and lit up the seat. It had been their seat when they were there, only two minutes ago. It's roughly five minutes in between each stop. She takes in roughly three hundred breaths in each of those five minutes. But she doesn't know it. She doesn't think to count. There is the breeze outside. She is sure of it. They are in the breeze. She is in the hum. The machinery flies by, penetrates her imagination, then darts to another corner. These are the things she wanted to tell them.



Remember the store? How it's floors were thick with blood? They ran in and the blood went all over. Right on all the screens. It was better than the movies. Better than the shows ever could've been. Dad went right up to them, purposefully, you know how he is, and offered them his handkerchief. I remember it was striped white and blue. The blue was azure, like we always wanted it to be when we were kids, when we were outside all the time. I'm staring at this picture and I'm trying to figure out where you found it. Because all I seem to know is that memory of the store. That store and all that blood. But our TV never got any blood on it. I think that's why dad bought it. Maybe that's too easy. Where'd you find this photo? And where did that TV go, anyway?



She comes 'round this step when you don't want her. That's what I tell the grandkids. Keeps 'em away. Say, "Yes kiddies that puss'd got worms and when she shat you see 'em wriggle 'round like it's a howl of a storm." The kids go on inside, make to eat my new cobbler, and I rock. I stare at her and I try not to look mean but she sees me, she sees through it. There ain't a stopping to her. I swear I want to kill that cat more and more each night.

Pictures by Linda Thea. Text by Greg Bem.