

Twentieth Century

I must have missed the last train out of this gray city.
I'm scrolling the radio through shhhhh. The streetlamps

fill with light, right on time, but no one is pouring it in.
Twentieth Century, you're gone. You're tucked into

a sleeping car, rolling to god-knows-where, and I'm
lonely for you. I know it's naïve. But your horrors

were far away, and I thought I could stand them.
Twentieth Century, we had a good life more or less,

didn't we? You made me. You wove the long braid
down my back. You kissed me in the snowy street

with everyone watching. You opened your mouth a little
and it scared me. Twentieth Century, it's me, it's me.

You said that to me once, as if I'd forgotten your face.
You strung me out until trees seemed to breathe,

expanding and contracting. You played "American Girl"
and turned it up loud. You said I was untouchable.

Do you remember the nights at Alum Creek, the lit
windows painting yellow Rothkos on the water?

Are they still there, or did you take them with you?
Say something. I'm here, waiting, scrolling the radio.

On every frequency, someone hushes me. Is it you?
Twentieth Century, are you there? I thought you were

a simpler time. I thought we'd live on a mountain
together, drinking melted snow, carving hawk totems

from downed pines. We'd never come back. Twentieth
Century, I was in so deep, I couldn't see an end to you.

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