Snow Train (Poet Lore)

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SNOW TRAIN

I watch a train full of snow go by.
Snow in window seats looking out on the grass
and bees and swimming pools.
Snow in aisle seats crowded by standing-room-only
snow compressed into solid mass.

When I say a train full of snow I mean so packed
that if you peel off its silver carapace
you have an exact replica in white
like a George Segal sculpture only instead
of a man on a park bench it’s a Metroliner
between New York and Boston.

I mean the direction I dream in—full speed ahead,
a train that requires neither conductor nor schedule,
nor steel shell for protection but holds together
by the force of our wonder.

A train with a turbine of snow,
a fuel filter of snow and wheels of snow
that spin in the clear sun of the day
as children wave from floats and scooters
and porches strewn with plastic toys.

An ethereal train that goes anywhere
it wants on fresh-laid tracks that vanish
with its passing, one that arrives
at the wrong time, in the wrong place
if it can stop at all. I mean for it to crash

into a darkening wood, its silence butting
choruses of cracking branches, kindling
for tonight’s blue fire long after
the last car’s barreled through.