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Blue

Juliet Kaufmann

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BLUE

All day the overcast ended just west of here. Beyond the far field we could see a featureless cerulean, out of reach and perfect, without depth, tantalizing us with the indifference of eternal sunlight on a day surrendered to fulminant gray. Normally, sky above far hills (gauzy dust and elements blurring the humid horizon) is not blue or gray but rose bleeding into gold or perhaps green; to name the hue of this jumble of effluents, particles, the subtle kinetic veil left hanging after factories lock up and call it a day, gaze upward at the meridian fixedly to define *azure*, noticing how deep and empty it is, how it opens and limits us, a definition made perfect by distance. Then glance at the horizon quickly to learn the color it offers up as relief from incessant blue. As a spectacled shy child who preferred reading to baseball, I would throw myself in the clover of left field and look until I felt myself begin to fall *up*—not vertigo—a drop into emptiness, unlike wind or water, but thrilling nonetheless. You are excessively serious, my teacher said, and you never smile—but of course, one cannot see the zenith of stars obscured by thin, unclouded air.