1989

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Roused on the isthmus dividing eastbound and westbound, launched from the grill of an ’86 Cutlass, wicked knot throbbing on my crown. I remember the driver swerving. I stood absolutely still. Ascension omitted. That frame’s been clipped

along with the wire joining input and animal fear. It was the year I attempted to defect to the lion enclosure, stuck neck-deep in the bars the pride stirred, rose upon their haunches. 25 years they’ve stalked from shade

in my mind’s eye. What a difference a foot makes notes the near-death recidivist, budged to the edge of the subway platform. When the ravening out of darkness speeds and the bad star advances in the channel

one eye looks inside, one away. To step or lapse to the flesh? No one is coming

to slather my head in margarine and slip me back to my keeper’s hands.