Sometimes When a Story Is Told

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This one from the bus driver’s dream—
a newspaper darkening
on a doorstep from morning mist.
Little brothers in pressed white shirts
sitting like bowling pins at attention:
each child, if behaved, permitted
a thimble of whiskey
the smell of which awakens her
in tears.

In such a detail
a possible largeness of spirit
beyond your reach.
An old refugee
argues with himself over
the nuances of the word for “guess” in each of his six languages.
In the middle of a brisk travelogue, a woman
stops to talk about a cart
overflowing with barrels of olive oil seen from a train.
She struggles to remember its importance
until prodded, Move on to the next town!—at which point
she folds over in laughter.