

Tobin J Greywolf: Gone

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Gone!

Tobin J. Greywolf

Writing 111, Professor Calhoun

KPC

Gone!

Trains ran by the house late at night, moving slow enough to board, hopefully with a heavy pack. I had gathered enough food to last a week, if I ate sparingly. Having learned, in my 14 years, the less you eat the smaller your stomach gets. I ate had eaten less and less over the last two weeks, preparing for the trip and was finally down to one meal a day. Which meant tonight was the night. The last boardable Train arrived around 3:00 am. I'd have to get in place by 2:30 am, if I was going to make it. I took inventory and resented having to leave most of my music, but at least I had my Walkman and a few of my favorite tapes. I broke into the locked cabinet holding my confiscated earring and stuck it in my pocket, retrieved the food I'd stored up, and packed. Satisfied I was ready, I snuck out the window, thankful I had learned how to bypass the alarm contacts from another kid in a previous Home. Once outside, I headed for the tracks and waited. Making sure my path, alongside the Train, was clear of anything that might trip me, running with a full military duffle bag. Once certain, I sat down and waited for my ride. My fingers tingled and my heart was racing. I thought it might stop beating all together when I saw the light from the Train.

I hid in some brush until the Engine passed, not wanting to be seen by the operator. I stood up and got ready to toss my pack into one of the open Doors. When the first Door appeared, I threw with all my might and missed, sending the pack bouncing off the side of the Train straight back at me. I dodged, as it landed where I was had been standing a second before. I cursed my aim, the Train, and anything else I could think of, picked up the pack, and waited for the next open Door. Half the Train had passed, and I was running out of time. To make this work I'd have to throw the pack before the Door was in front of me. With the next Door rapidly approaching, I readied myself again, this time preparing to dodge as well, just in case I failed

Commented [LC1]: This is a little awkward

Commented [LC2]: When did you gather the food? if a little at a time over the course of a week or so, "had" is important here.

Commented [LC3]: Sentence fragment. Try revising to include a subject...or connect this phrase with the sentence previous

again. I threw as hard as I could and was elated to see it land inside. So much so, I briefly forgot I needed to get myself on the Train. I started running to catch the Door but realized the Train was speeding up.

“Shit, I’m not going to make it.”

I saw another Door appear. It’s now or never. I pumped my legs as fast as I could and jumped for all I was worth.

Half of me landed in the car; the other half was dangling from the opening. I had a slight grip on the ~~floor boards~~ floorboards and held very still while I looked for something a little more substantial to grab. I saw a handle on the Door and decided to scoot over to it, hoping to pull myself up. I slowly made my way over, trying not to use the lower half of my body for fear of falling out. I reached the handle and gave it a few tugs to make sure it was secured. Satisfied it was, I grabbed the handle with both hands and tried to climb up. I was almost there when the Door suddenly came loose and slid about halfway closed. Now I was hanging from the handle, dangling outside the Train—my feet scraping the ground. Visions of being pulled under the Train flashed through my mind. It suddenly dawned on me, I could die! I tried to pull my legs up but couldn’t reach the opening. TV made this look so much easier! Sweaty palms were making it very difficult to maintain a grip on the handle. Suddenly my right hand slipped free, swinging me to the opposite side of the Door, smacking into the side of the Train. The fear and pain spurred me to instinctively grab the edge of the Door frame. I was now stretched across the Door opening, spread eagle, with my back facing the inside. Panicking, I shut my eyes to the world speeding by as the Train continued to accelerate. I managed to get a foot on the Door’s threshold. Using the leverage, I brought up the other foot and slowly walked back until I was inside the car. I collapsed on the floor, relieved and thankful I was still in one piece.

Commented [LC4]: Can you show this more than tell?

Commented [LC5]: A semicolon connects only two complete clauses; try a dash or comma here instead

Commented [LC6]: Smacking and swinging are connected to hand. They are the grammatical action that the subject “hand” does, which isn’t exactly what you’re trying to convey. Requires slight revision

Commented [LC7]: Another prime moment where you could show rather than tell

While lying there, trying to calm down, I remembered my pack was two cars ahead of me. I had planned to jump off when I was in a secluded area, to avoid being seen. Now, that would require me to climb back out there and make my way up two cars; I decided it wasn't worth the risk. I'd have to take my chances wherever we ended up, hop off and quickly grab my pack the second we stopped. I sat with my back against the wall, lit a cigarette and watched the moonlit world pass by outside the Doors, wishing I had the Walkman from my pack.

I noticed the Train begin to slow down and got up to see where we were. As luck would have it, we came to a stop in a factory split in two by the tracks. There was no one around as I jumped out and ran to grab my pack, then quietly slipped out of the factory; following the tracks back the way we had just come. Once I was confident that I was far enough away from people, I stopped and pulled out my head phones, put in a tape and continued along, feeling much better about life than I had in a long time. I walked until I was too tired to continue. Seeing a large field of tall grass, I prepared a spot, as I had done when I was younger making hideouts in overgrown fields. Using my pack and coat for a pillow and blanket, I watched the night sky slowly surrender to dawn. Finally feeling safe, I fell asleep listening to my Music.

Commented [LC8]: I'm curious about the type of music you were listening to. Maybe name the song or artist, since that will tell us more about you

Commented [LC9]: Another opportunity to "show"

Commented [LC10]: Wow! This is powerful. And I get the sense that this is the main point...that the harrowing experience of the train symbolizes the unsafe experience of being in foster care. I wonder if you could give one or two flashbacks that describe what you were running from. This would underscore your point more clearly.

Narrative Rubric	
<p>Thesis: Does it have a clear point (thesis): Can your Yereader identify why you're telling the story? See my last comment. While I can identify a point, I'd like more background/details to support the point that I think is being made. That way I can be more certain about that point.</p>	17/20
<p>Support: Is your point supported by strong reasons and evidence: do you provide details about the story that help convince your reader of your main point? You do a beautiful job describing a very unsafe sequence of events, which then leads us to understand how you alone in the middle of a field feels safe. That said, and this goes with my last comment as well, I'd like to have more details about how your life prior to escape was unsafe.</p>	17/20
<p>Organization: Is your narrative organized: Can your reader easily follow your main point? Nicely done. Your story is clear and organized.</p>	19/20
<p>Prose/Mechanics: Is it clearly written: Does your prose accurately and simply convey your message? Is your narrative free of grammar, spelling, and other mechanical errors? Do you use APA format and style correctly? Your prose is generally strong; however, there are moments above where a sentence is slightly unclear in its construction or where there are slight issues with grammar. I highlighted everything I noticed because I know that you are truly here to learn and improve. Please don't read the comments as all negative; I wanted to be comprehensive with you because I know you'll take the suggestions to heart in order to improve.</p>	17/20
<p>Genre: Does it display characteristics of a successful narrative: a clearly identified event, setting, and details that make the story come alive; a consistent point of view; a clear point about why the story matters? You've done a very nice job with this. Thank you!</p>	19/20
<p>Total Tobin, Well done on this narrative. You describe a harrowing experience with immediacy and suspense. You describe a clearly identified event and give good details about the setting. There are a few places for improvement as indicated above, but this is a great start to the semester. I look forward to reading more from you in the future.</p>	89% B+

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