Word

David Woo

The high sweep of waves, like the bulging arc of a grand piano, and the silence of deer in a field of lupine and trefoil, and the underthrum of the engine turning a switchback back to the city—“afternoon fog,” the announcer warns, each new sea vista reverting to redwoods, back and forth, back and forth, as if we were tracing the sinuous legato of the Schumann trio on the car radio.

Today the patches of sunlit mist that flow in through the foothills and obscure the filigree on a row of Queen Annes are occlusions from my mother’s CT-scan: that steel-blue blur on blur of cortex and wine-dark hemorrhage.

A year after her stroke they’ve flown out for their anniversary, the otherworldly monotone of her “aprosodia” leaving her wary of voicing the love of new scenery with anything more than a tactful coo and purl, until we emerge from the last tunnel to where the bridge’s gargantuan red suspensions loom between a lowering mist and the bleared upswell of blond hills, showing a mere tendril of red cables and one tower’s massive tuning fork, uncanny, oddly collate, but enough for her to stutter, “Beauty, beauty, beauty…,” a word my father whispers to completion:

“full, full, full.”