

Next Stop

May morning. I lie between two dogs, the little new one rests against my leg, the middle-sized old one curls into an oval in her bed on the floor. They've been fed. I've been coffeed. In-between-time.

I've been reading some poems, and though I can think of nothing they've said that would cause this to happen, I'm sixteen and on a train going off to college. The engine has failed to keep up with the striding sun so

the sky has fallen dark. An answering dark has risen from the forest and hills of Penn's woods.

I'd been on trains before, once in awhile the New-Haven Hartford into New York City even though it was more expensive

than trolley to the subway. Now I've eaten from the heavy silver and elegant china of the dining car, smoked a cigarette in the shifting, noisy space where the car before links to the car behind. I have

gotten my one sweater out of my suitcase and folded my sports jacket with the too-short sleeves so it wouldn't wrinkle much. I've read all my eyes will allow in the dim coach car light.

Nothing to do but try to sleep while the train ticks along the rails that will not let it go other than where it was going, then sleeping, fitfully, even through the Pittsburgh stopover,

till I wake up, feed the dogs, make coffee and start to read poems....

