

KATE THORPE / An Incident

At one point
the bride's neck swells out.
Luckily
her dress is low cut. And the guide
loosens her bodice, her stomach. Come out,
come out, the lace knots.

She is now on a train
in the dark and her bodice
undone, her breasts out.

The guide says, look. Why are
your feet more solid than
your mouth. How your stomach
is curved out. And your
sexual parts. Hands in a knot.

At least
there is no one else
to watch. The train stumbles. At least the smoke
comes from electric sockets. She
cannot talk. She cannot start
to hold her skirt up.

O dear, says the dark.
O love, says a wallet.
The guide's bank card, the ticket
torn up, notes to impart.
The notes read themselves
to the poor bride strapped
to the dark, and us.
We do not want
to see what

the world has become.
The doors are only thinking
their own thoughts: come out, girl,
let's explore the outward world.
They lecture, they cajole, soothe.
The train is a compass,
a residue. What to do. Can the guide
take me back to my room. Which room.

How can I be soothed.
Where might I find comfort.