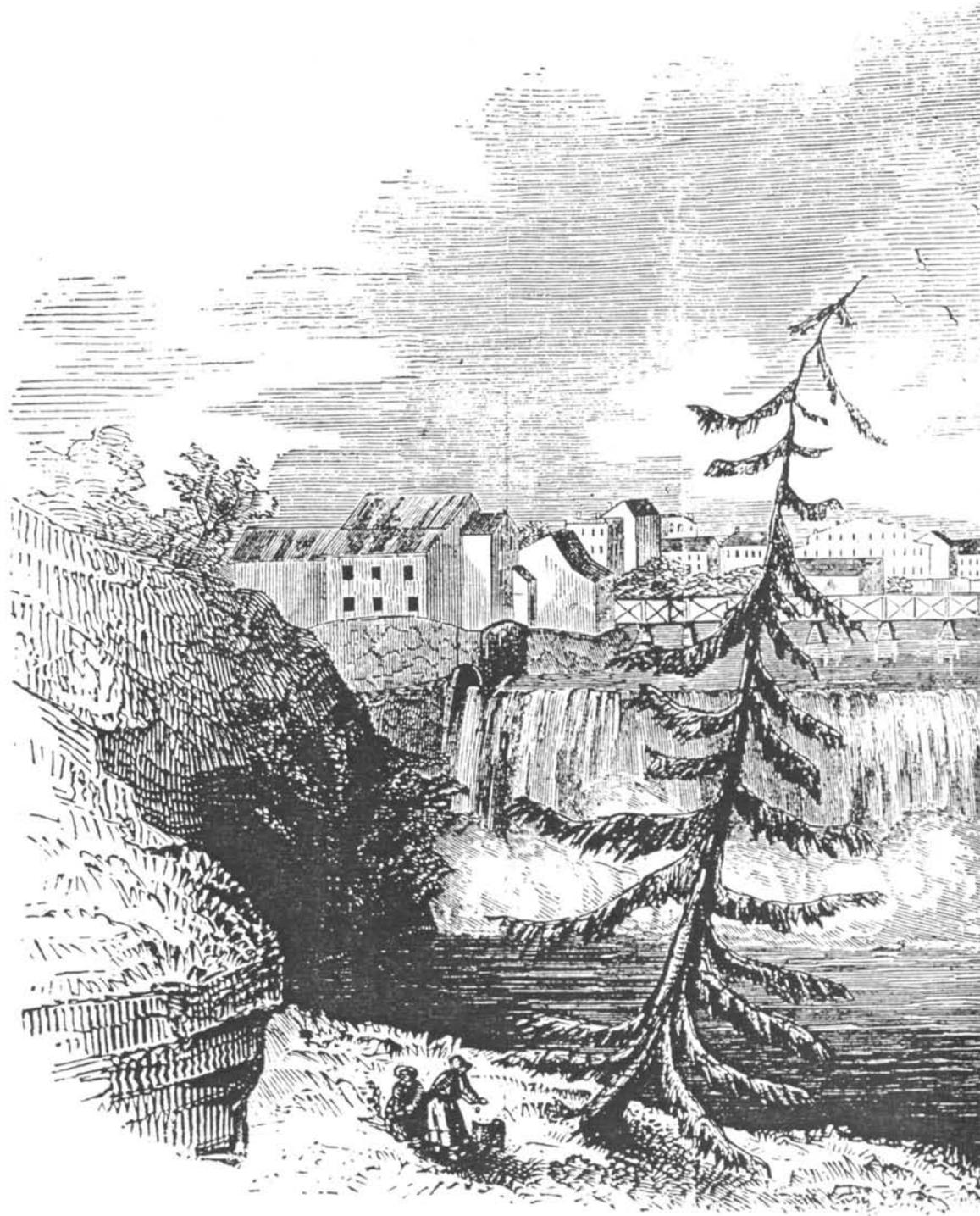
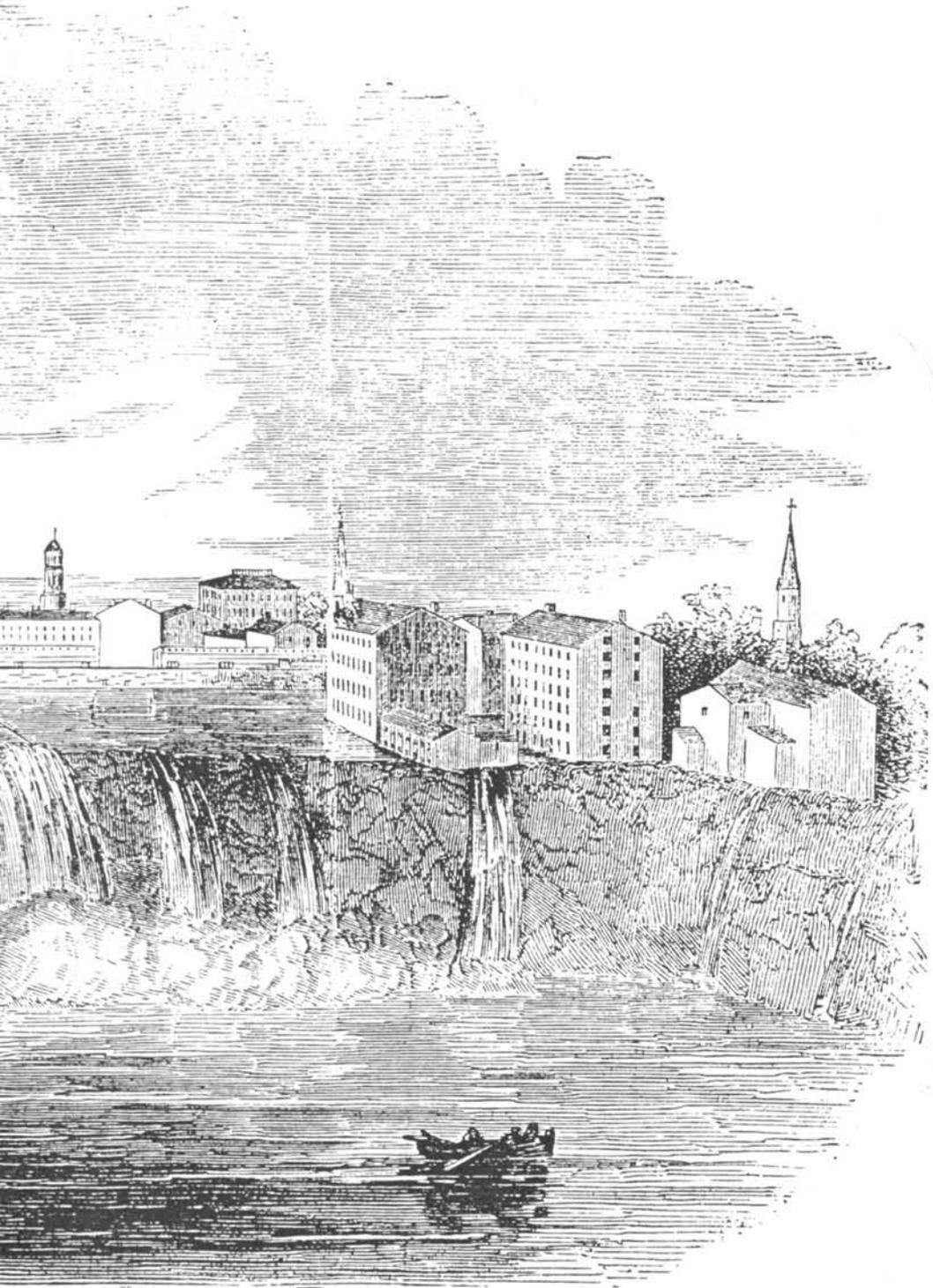


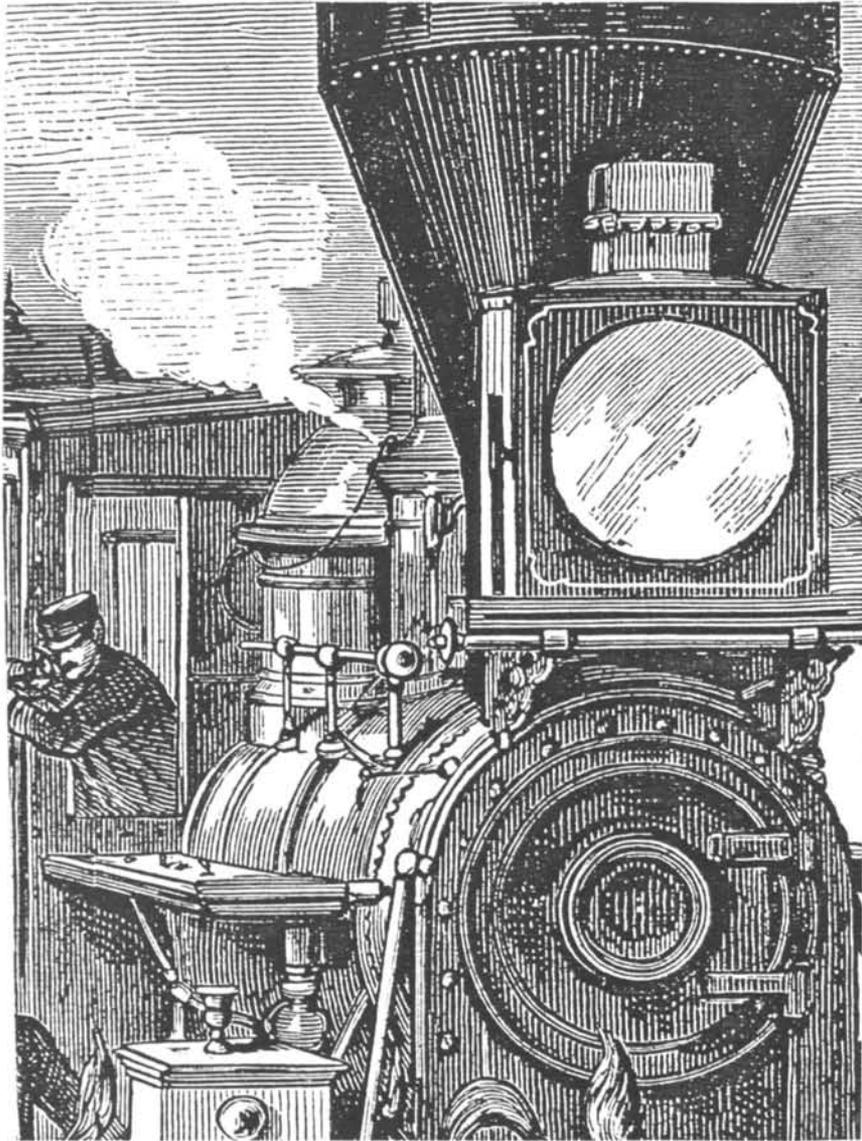
RAILS
AWAY

Emilie Glen





RAILS AWAY



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THE POET'S PRESS

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RAILS AWAY

Train of child was
the child I was
Christmas holidays in New York
river lording
high valleys mountains shaping the sky
Sitting all the while swift sitting
by motion windows
warning bells at lone crossings
steel speed past the great lifting palisades
redbrown sunned
to the everything city the great rainbow way
bird-of-paradise signlights
laughing away the scare dark
concerts in vast halls flashing
prismed chandeliers
house lights dimming

curtain going up
to the wide world of a play
mummies and temples dinosaurs and jewels
walls and walls of paintings
the rainbow city
Christmas all around
toys down every street
store windows in Christmas motion
restaurants in ruby candle globes
pastries of the world on silver trays
My city mine

In the blink of a signlight
train speeding back up the Hudson
bells at the lone crossings
rushing me farther away from window cliffs
to the lesser town of Syracuse
for all its seven hills like Roma
cried at the falling away of lights
Homesick going
homesick going home

§ § §

Train of the student
past cornstalks browning
cows on their hillsides
woods in the red the gold the green
wild flowers by brooks in a hurry
train toward skyreaching towers
I'll be studying with the great virtuoso
who accepts only pupils with
concert potential
Wheels faster faster
fast as I can play cadenzas
wheels in steel demand
prove yourself prove yourself
Steep palisades smalling me
my stomach sinking sickening
steel rails bringing students
from all the states of the union
to the city of greats

How can I be the one

Back up train back up

take me home

to my piano on the hill

my grand red as the palisades

poplar leaves applauding

my Moonlight Sonata

Subway poster once said

Good is not enough

when you dream of being great

nothing but world concert stage

worth the ache the sweat

Upstate my recitals were crammed

with relatives and friends

more flowers than I could carry

up to the terrace

all the stars approving

Train rushing me into the sunset

along the salt tiding river

faster faster to the lighted city

only the pit of my stomach

pulling me down
my fingers ready to trace the galaxies
tone-tell the universe

§ § §

Back upstate no longer student
train whistle loning the hills
rail ribbons steeling
Concert class withered my hands
all those prodigies taking over
the keyboard
with rhapsodies concertos etudes
My tapering fingers would split at the tips
from long hours at the keyboard
Don't know whether the piano gave me up
or I gave the piano up
don't know as I ride the rivered miles
to the piano still on the hill of sunsets

Down the lording Hudson in the new year
through snow powderings towards any job
that will let me live among the towers
reception desk files typing pool
my virtuoso fingers trained for speed
perhaps an art gallery a music library
can take night courses
in Theory and Counterpoint
write music for someone else to play
Faster wheels faster
to a crescendo of lights
My city mine

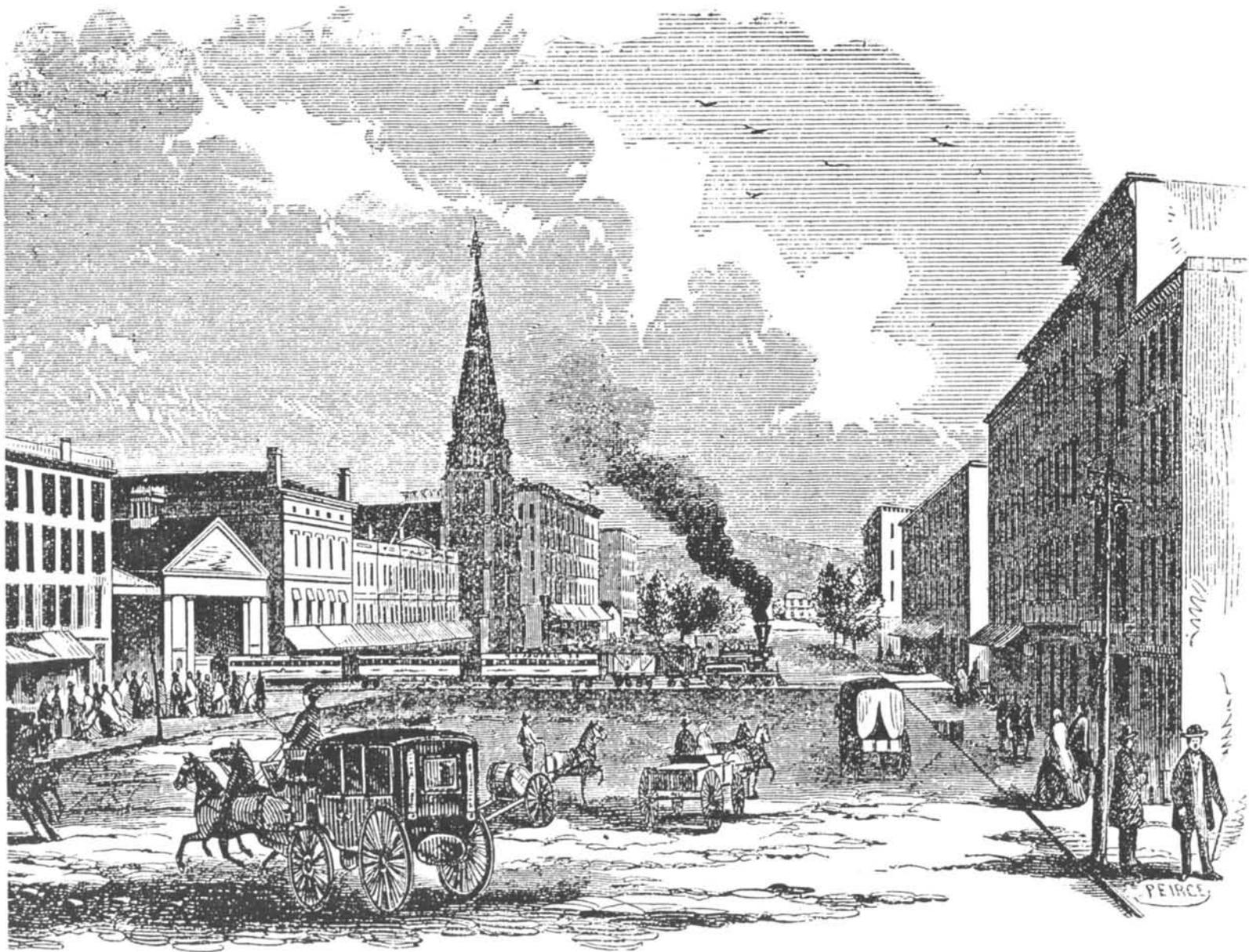
§ § §

Upstate for the holidays
snow whitening the palisades
beyond the ribboning steel
My love beside me

he'll be getting off at Rome
to visit his people
I will be going to Syracuse to visit mine
and to find the lost keys black and white
My musical knowledge
has made me his editorial assistant
on *Quarter Notes*
He the literary one older by about ten years
teaching me the wide world
beyond the keyboard

Separated from his wife
separated he said
but in the swayings of the train
I wonder if only by physical distance
Do I care that he can never have children

Sway train sway
past snow hills where mammoths once roamed
where Rip Van Winkle slept
his hundred year sleep



§ § §

On past the seven hills today
past the grand piano
past Father Mother
no longer the tall to my small
Steel ribbons unrolling past Syracuse
shining on to Rochester
I'm riding with my soldier husband
on our way to meet his family
broad shouldered exciting in his uniform
Sergeant in the medical corps
ferns uncurling streams in a hurry
fields of corn just starting
used to dread seeing the corn
begin to tall off with my summer
Plenty of time for trips to Syracuse
when he is in Korea
The old Erie Canal buoys marking the channel

for barges and pleasure boats
Got a mule her name is Sal
fifteen years on the Erie Canal
Used to play around the old locks
when we visited my aunt
saw them as ruined castles
applause of the cattails for a song I made up
My first love printed a piano piece
of mine
in *Quarter Notes* had a violinist friend
play it at a Town Hall debut
Managing editor on *Quarter Notes*
ever since
he moved back to Rome
that was after his wife in Florida
for the divorce
walked into the ocean one night
deeper deeper until she drowned
No Venus rising up out of the sea
but a despairing childless woman
descending into the waters

streams still in a hurry

wild flowers in snow bloom

I lean into his shoulder tweed

fragrant with peat fires

Train slowing for Rome

stopping at the station with heaves and sighs

He kisses me goodbye

and I watch him going through the arch

to the station like the ruins of an old castle

The sickness the sinking

that I had as a child when the Hudson

disappeared

his figure with dispatch case

lone through the arch

nor does he look back

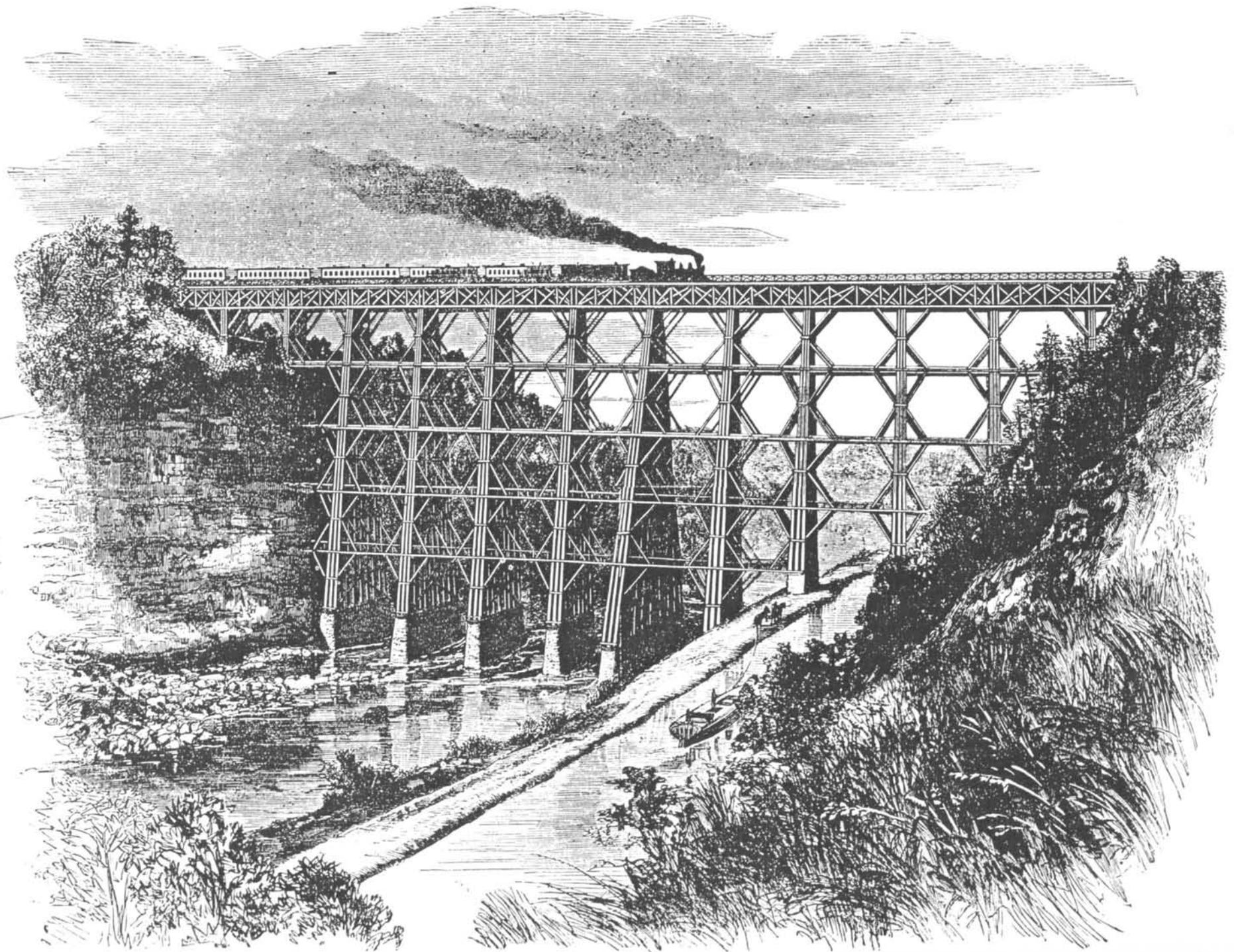
Goodbye for now for now

Swift warning bells at the crossings

as the train steels toward the night

of Syracuse

Goodbye Goodbye



that's how she won his wife

Sitting beside my husband remembering
Apple knockers we upstaters
something draws apple knockers
to apple knockers

§ § §

One more time Up the Hudson one more time
and there will be one more time
and one more time
wheels mumbling more time more time
visiting my soldier love
at the VA hospital in Buffalo
his lungs are wasting
Our little son reading his Star Wars book
Luke and Darth Vader in his pocket
Hudson in diamond ice chips
Dismal red bricks of abandoned factories
black window holes broken down sheds
We steel past the locust shells

of my mind's Rome
mind's Syracuse

Grasping at my hand breathing in his oxygen
my husband had me promise not to let them
bury him in a military hole in the ground
there's room for me in our plot near Rochester
only Mother there so far

Past Rochester we sing with the wheels

You'll always know your neighbor

you'll always know your pal

if you've ever navigated on the Erie Canal

Can't we go on to Niagara Falls

the little boy asks between brook rushes

to the snack bar

Want to put on one of those raincoats

and go under like walking on the moon

A deer rosy with sunset

at the edge of a field in snow

hawks overhead splitting the sky

with their outer wing feathers

Sing we sing about knowing every inch
of the way
from Albany to Buffalo

§ § §

My love in Korea

I come to Grand Central
with our little son just two
imaging his father
even to the proud bridge
of his nose

Under the great dome of stars
I point out to him Orion Taurus Lyra
the Great Bear

Buy a ticket for Rochester
to celebrate Thanksgiving with his
mother and father
to give them joy of the child

at the brook beginning of words
Steel ribbons unroll for my little one
From the window he discovers the Hudson
of the redbrown palisades
the marinas barges tankers
mountains like cutouts in his
coloring book

I tell him of Rip Van Winkle
and the hundred year sleep
Past Rome too enchanted by the boy
to wonder how it is with my first love
Syracuse just another stop on the way
to Rochester

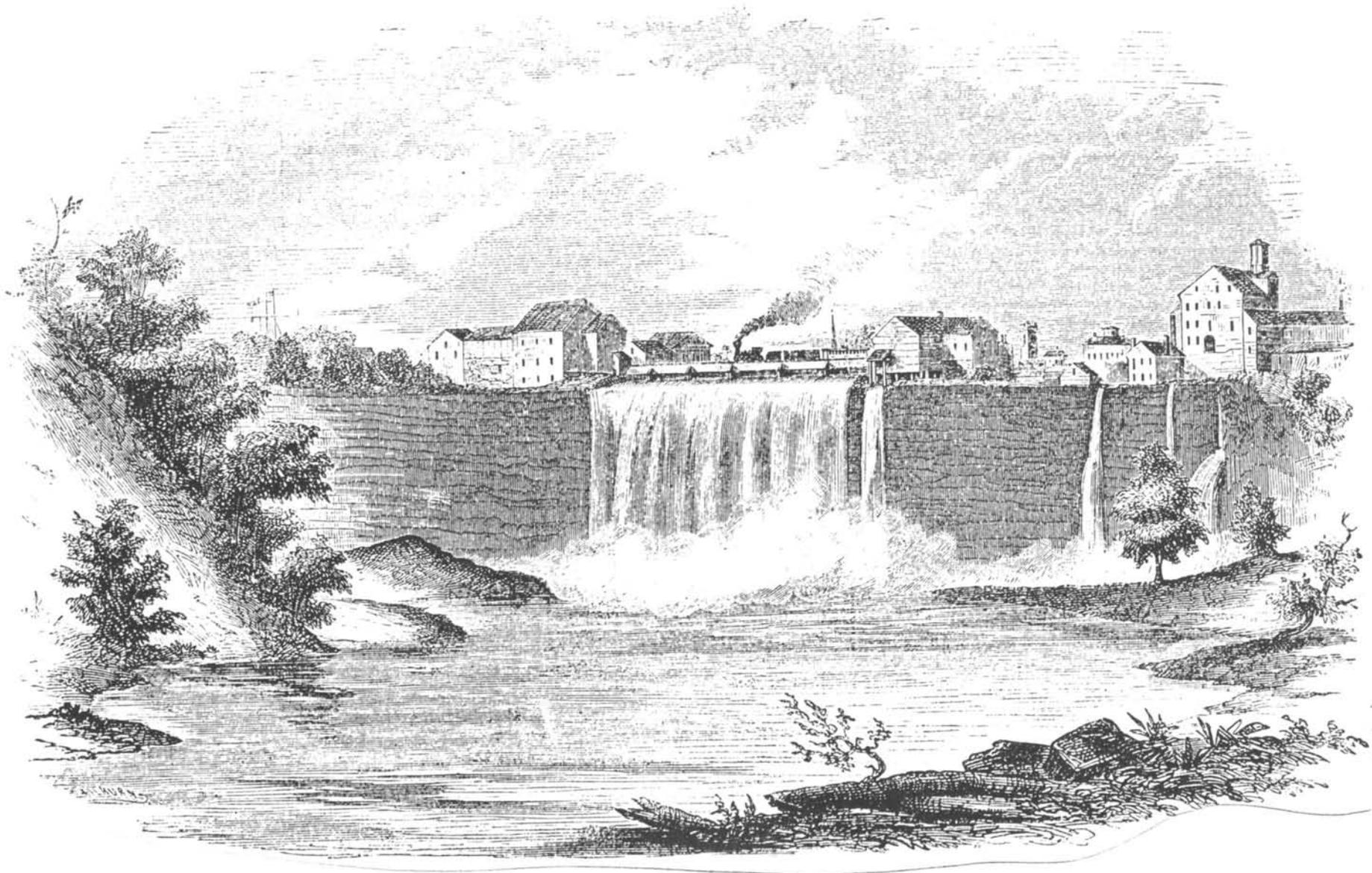
Mother Father gone
the grand where?

How does his father's garden
grow in November

Will there be flowers left for the boy
to touch smell even taste?

From the moving window I glimpse
wild asters

greenings
some leaves still redding
golding the woods
They'll be asking me to play their
rattletrap piano
when I'm sadly out of practice
I tell the little one about the snakes
in the Montezuma marshes
show him the mucklands where his celery grows
sing with the wheels
*We've hauled some barges in our day
filled with lumber, coal and hay*
Marshes crawling with snakes
mucklands growing celery
we sing *low bridge, everybody down,
low bridge 'cause we're comin' to a town*
Rochester lighting up for us
in the night of the slowing train



into his wasting lungs
a motion picture summer unreels
at our window
hills seeming to abide
tasseled corn munching cows
fat red silos
fireweed by streams in a hurry
We watch the indicator inching towards
red empty
stations of the cross Rome Utica
Amsterdam Schenectady
Albany another team of medics
with another tank of life
Again we are delaying the train

Hudson Rhinecliff Poughkeepsie
the indicator falling toward red
Hudson live with sails
sun blood red over the palisades
Long wait at Harmon
my husband holds my hand

in desperate grip
the little boy nuzzling in
The tunnel the long dark tunnel
people reaching down their luggage
for coming out into the lighted city
We ready ours for the waiting ambulance.

§ § §

Upstate for the funeral
in the fullness of August
leaves bursting their green
Hudson alive with sails
cabin cruisers a yacht or two
marinas crowded
steel rails in never meeting parallels
to Rochester and beyond

Sitting with my boy by the motion window

I am at the piano on the hill
 playing Chopin's *March Funebre*
salt of the Hudson in my tears
 try to crowd them back for the boy's sake
all he knows of death is to slay
 his star figures
and bring them back to life for another battle
 in ever living outer space
Tears for my husband share tears
 for my first love
like the two streams in France
that meet without changing their hues
 of blue and browngreen
Death train death train
 image of a Father
who could be riding alongside him now
 free of his wasted body
Sing Mommy Sing
 mine the voice of rubble earth
 beneath his voice clear as the spring
at the start of the lording Hudson

Fifteen years on the
years on the
Steel speeding along the old Erie
my little son holding the American flag
taken from the casket
and folded into our keeping
I hear Lincoln's funeral train
past dooryards where the lilacs bloom
Fields tall with corn streams hurrying
grasses bending the wind
no more stress station to station
Rome Utica Schenectady Amsterdam
Death train death train
wheels sounding death train
along the copper rose Hudson
white with sails
I'll not be riding down the Hudson again
not back not forth
upstate earth is for graves I'll never visit
upstate earth is for rotting factories
gone pianos

the loved are not earthed
they live in a universe where all is energy
that's how it is with infinity
no more back and forth back and forth
no more trains along the Hudson the old Erie
The train people are reaching down
their luggage
in the tunnel through
to the lighted



