A Vagrant's Instructions for Children at the Trainyard

Q. Woodward
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Press your ear to the track so hard it makes a seal, locking out the shouts of the fearful. Wrap your palm around the rail until the rhythm shakes your hand as you try to steady the long beam. Place your body between the blades, stretching your narrow frame across three tar-soaked ties. There is a secret in your smallness. Push your eyes to the bottom of their sockets until you see the tracks marry at the horizon. Squeeze a rock in each fist so that the pain distracts you from the growing tremor. Once the smoke appears, hold your head flat against the wood; do as I say—the metal axles will glide over you, but only if you bury yourself low enough. Clench your teeth when you know you are about to be swallowed—if you scream, it will know you are afraid. Ignore the sparks that fall onto your face and clothing. The stinging will not last long. Move slowly when the chaos has ended. Wait until it has disappeared to touch the track—still hot enough to burn
your hand. The scar will remind you
that miracles have not ceased.
Do not leave the trainyard until your heart stills.
I am telling you, child, this moment
will leave you sanctified. When it returns,
bring your evidence: a pocketful of
pennies pressed into soup spoons.
The train will remember you.