

JOHN LAMBERSKY

NEXT TIME

“I wish I had counted the cars,” you say
as the freight train lumbers past the crossing
in the valley near our house.

Suddenly, I do too
but it is nearly gone, and soon
the arm rises and the lights
stop flashing, the bells stop.

For a moment, it seems important
to follow it—I could drive fast,
you could count the cars. We would know
how many there were.

Instead my foot on the gas,
the jounce of the railroad tracks under wheel,
the train disappears along the curve beside the river,
through the swaying tall grasses, heavy with seed.