

The train pulled out and rattled along. John Hale and Alfred Moore followed the coal mines where they could find jobs. Mining families had a close bond, due to survival and comfort. Alfred leaned back and closed his eyes. John's little head fell onto Alfred's shoulder. The rocking motion put him to sleep, and Annie placed him in an empty seat.

The train chugged along. Annie had an hour and a half for quiet dreaming. She remembered riding with her mother and Claude and Melinda into Seattle on the May morning the Negro men were chosen to be strike breakers. The women had changed trains in Seattle, from the Northern Pacific to the Columbia Puget Sound Railroad that was owned by the coal company. The train had come through Renton, Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and to Franklin, 35 miles east of Seattle. Annie was lost in dreaming and automatically pulled down a window shade. Alfred opened one eye. "What are you doing?" "They will throw rocks at us." "What?" "Oh, I am sorry, I forgot where I was for a minute." John woke up and Annie changed him. The big carpet bag carried diapers, corn starch for rash, cod liver oil, and a spoon. Alfred placed John between them. He wasn't happy, so Annie nursed him. "You'll have to wean him soon." "He can drink from a cup, but he loves his milk. It keeps him from disease; that is what a nurse told me." John sat on Alfred's lap and looked out of the window.

Annie tried to keep from dreaming: "I wish I had a baby." She could hear her friend Odetta Jackson and see the box car they played on running down the track with Odetta's baby sister on board. Good old Melinda had the baby.

Alfred said, "I'll take John to an empty seat so you can close your eyes and rest." Annie closed her eyes and let her head lean back. It was hard not to remember Franklin: the wooden desks in school, the terrible August 24th morning, and trailing behind the rest of the funeral mourners. She was afraid of graveyards, but no one seemed to understand. Claude called her a "fraidy cat". She wished she was a cat instead of a mourner. Annie's mind drifted further into the past. She picked up her share of bundles by the railroad shack house and hummed a tune when she was placed aboard a horse-drawn cart going to Saint Paul.

The train pulled into its designated place, ending the journey to Tacoma. "All out, now!" the conductor called. "What now?" "Wait and see." A hay wagon had stopped near the tracks, "Going far, Mister?" "To Franklin." "Got a load of feed for the mules — Oregon Improvement Co. order." "Take passengers?" "For 25¢ climb on back of the wagon. It will be bumpy; hang on to the kid. All ready?" He gave the horse a swat on the rump, and they jogged along. The hay smelled sweet, and John sank down in it. "No place on earth

has such scenery. Let's hope the rain that makes it so green doesn't rain on us." John liked the ride and chewed on a straw.

The day was almost over by the time they entered Franklin and found the house John Hale had rented. Alfred pulled open the door, loose on its hinges. "Boy, this place doesn't change." Annie touched the side of the grey clapboard house. She brushed the dust from her hands, but did not wipe them on her dress like she did when she was little. Fannie came to the door. "You here already? Come on in." The kerosene lamp was lit; it had gotten dark early. Annie placed her bag and John on the carpetless floor. She looked around the bare room. "We're home all right. I loved sight seeing in Seattle, but I'm glad we're home." She gave her father a hug. Annie knew the house would not look this way for long. Soon there would be rag rugs for the floor, curtains, scrubbed dish shelves, pictures for the walls, and make-shift furniture. Alfred sniffed. The smell was warm and inviting. "Hot biscuits, Fannie?" "Chicken and gravy too. We got some old packing crates so's we can all sit down at the same time." John took his place at the head of the table as if it were polished mahogany. Alfred found a seat, "You don't have to give me a second invite." John picked up his grandson and placed him on his knee. "You better eat, Little John, so's you will be as big as me, Big John Hale. Now you're just Little John." The crispy chicken and biscuits sopped with gravy disappeared from the plates. "Can't tell you how hungry I was," said John. "Good!" Fannie pulled him on the shoulder. "Carry some water for us so we can wash the dishes. Lots of people, lots of dishes." "Sure, Ma." "Claude, put some wood into the stove to heat the water." The men filled the large kettle. Fannie got out a fresh bar of yellow washing soap. With so many hands to help, Melinda, Fannie, and Annie, the clean dishes were quickly stacked on the counter. "I haven't had a chance to clean dish shelves yet." "Mama, you have only been here for one day." Melinda shook her head. There was no left-over food to put away; they knew how to judge amounts. Everything had to be eaten. Fannie was careful, otherwise rats would roam around. Everyone in the company houses were not so careful — and they had unwanted visitors.

After dinner there was a time for reflection. John quoted a scripture as usual and gave thanksgiving for a safe trip from Buxton, Iowa, and that they were all together again in Franklin, Washington. There was time for remembering the town, the people who left, who stayed, the births, and the marriages. Remembering was good; it gave them a time of belonging. Coal mining towns were moving communities. People usually saw each other again, maybe after a few years had passed.

All the men had jobs promised, so houses were reserved for them. The company paid contract work so much