



journalette 7 - April 20, 2025
Curated by [Tish Davis](#)
Editor's Edition



[Richard Grahn](#) - A Patch of Earth

Noon on the Ohio

By [Tish Davis](#)

Concord Township, Ohio, USA

The Ohio is the most beautiful river on earth. Its current gentle, waters clear, and bosom smooth and unbroken by rocks and rapids, a single instance only excepted.¹

the muted river—
a towboat nudging a coal barge
upstream
the passenger in the back
of a company van

Jackhammers
on the driver's side
cracking concrete—
the road crew boss
signals with his hands

In a gravel lot not far from the road, workers change into noontime poses. Some have removed their shirts. One rubs his biceps; another twists the cloth to wring out the sweat. Some of the younger men gather around a standpipe and splash water on their faces.

As the van starts the climb up and out of the valley, the passenger rehearses her presentation. Soon they will arrive at their plant in Ironton where one of the Vice Presidents will announce that it is closing. Remembering the train derailment in East Palestine, she reminds herself not to over wash her hands, and to politely pass, if offered coffee.

graffiti on rail cars
painted with a thick brush
locomotives
linked together
drawing a dark line

There's no caboose. The train simply ends retracting the line that separates the road from the river.

Now the passenger fumbles for the switch that lowers the glass. There isn't one that will tint the river blue . . .

1. [Notes on the State of Virginia](#) published in 1781–82, [Thomas Jefferson](#)