

KIM GOLDBERG

Rail-Walking in Three Easy Lessons

1. The secret to walking the rails

is to not look down,
not even think about it at all,
just look off at the cows
in the fields,
or the coalminers' shacks stacked
like a mouth of old teeth
beside the tracks,
all loose and
falling out.
if you hear a whistle, jump off
to the side,
other than that
just trust your feet to find steel
every time

2. The secret to writing a poem while walking the rails

is to have your pad open and
pen uncapped, no
fumbling in pockets with
one hand while other windmills
like madman stabbing
butt to the left, head to the right,
sliced in half the wrong
way by
invisible plumb bob line,
trying to keep gravity

under wraps
so he doesn't streak
the Grand Unified Field
at half-time

3. The secret to staying dry
while writing a poem
while walking the rails

is to get so good
you can outrun each raindrop
or dodge them by bending
at the waist
when you occupy the frequency domain
like that cute Keanu Reeves in
The Matrix,
the first one that is,
the only one that was
any good—did you know his name means
“cool breeze over the mountains”
in Hawaiian?