

The Closing Doors

We got out of the bright yellow cab at Penn Station in New York City to catch a train homeward for Boston. We went down a long escalator and over to a red ticket machine. It was a stifling Friday afternoon at summer rush hour and the station was very crowded. I had on a lime green sundress with white polka dots and a pink flower. My mom stared at the big board. Whenever it clicked and blinked a crowd of nervous people would run for one of the four dark staircases that led to the basement. They had suitcases, take-out food and kids that they had to drag along. In all directions I could hear crying babies and chatter. Even though we had arrived early, it was no use because no one knew which staircase to take until the board clicked and blinked a track number next to the destination. My mom explained that we were going to have to run because once the train pulled into the station there would only be a couple of minutes to board. I asked her if I could get a cold drink. She said, "ok" and we walked over to a convenience store with neck pillows, vending machines and magazines. As we walked she still couldn't look away from that glowing board. Some more clicking and blinking and she jumped, luckily it wasn't our train yet. It was exciting to be on such high alert waiting for the track number. Travelers have to pay extra attention to everything at all times because getting around can be complicated, and rushed. Like racing to a cab as soon as it pulls over - "Quick! Get in we're in traffic!" Or jumping onto the subway as soon as it pulls into the station "Quick! - before the doors close!" With my old silver camera I snapped a picture of my sandals and one of my now dirtied flower suitcase. I took one of my nervous mom staring at the board. She was definitely not in vacation-mode anymore. Finally, just as I was starting to get comfortable sitting on my smashed suitcase and holding the cold water bottle our track number flashed. "Quick! Run for the stairs over there!" We squeezed in with the crowd, pouring down to a smelly hot platform. There was the train, a long gray tube with mostly closed doors. It was very echoey with its cement walls and kids started making playful hooting sounds, wait for the response and then start laughing. The train already had lots of people on board staring back at us and we ran along the side looking for a way in. People were already pushing to get into the few openings. We ran all the way to the end of the train without luck of finding an open door. We raced back to the first car and there was room! My mom and I ran up to the door and it shut right on us. The train was leaving. Oh no, I thought, we can't get stuck here. I frantically knocked on the door saying, "Open up." A lady with brown hair in a bun coming out of her cap opened it and asked, "Are you first class?" I thought she meant 1st grade. "Yes!", I said. So she let me on. And I pulled my mom in behind me. Even though we had to stand I was glad to be on that train.