Her Next Victim

Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"It would be much too dangerous to think about Crazy Helen. Even more so to look at her, but you can't help it. Your eyes just sort of drift in her direction every time she walks up those steps, every time she breathes. She gets on the stop after me and for her half hour ride I can't help but stare."

Cover Page Footnote
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You can hear her coming before you actually see her. Her heels make this clinking noise as she slowly makes her way up the three rubber coated stairs. The bracelets on her wrists jingle-jangle as she moves them from side to side as she walks. Her acrylic hooker red nails scrape against the railing as she hoists herself onto the bus. Then, she appears.

Her white socks puff out from her black high heels. She wears knee-highs underneath them, one of which has rolled down to her ankle. She wears a long, flowing brown skirt that falls half-way between her ankle and knee. Her white blouse is unevenly buttoned and un-tucked on one side. She wears a red cardigan that has begun to fray at the edges. Her bright pink lipstick is smeared across her lips and onto her cheek. Her painted on face is accentuated with bright blue eye shadow and fake eyelashes. Her hair is all over the place, but hidden under a plastic rain hat. Rain or shine, she always wears that hat. It is tied neatly under her chin.

She takes her usual seat behind Bobby, the bus driver, and she begins her usual routine. She goes around and stares at each person on the bus until they acknowledge her and return her smile. I wait, anticipating her stare. I can feel her eyes look me up and down and then rest on my face.

I try to fight it but my eyes aren’t under my control. My eyes float up and meet hers. Against my will, a smile creeps across my face. Satisfied, she moves on.