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Map

The armchair was yellow.
It curled around his body.
His leg ran over the side—hung
there like a curtain.
He held a map. The word “North”
lay flat on his knee, with “California”

pressed beneath his fingers. California
sat well beyond his window. Only yellow
autumn grass and the horizon graced his north-
facing view. Light ran through glass—striking his body
‘til he rose to shut the curtain.
He stopped. His fingers hung

on to the faded cloth that once hung
from a new rod in California.
*Two hands hoisting a curtain
just sewn from fabric patterned with large yellow
roses—lowering, to set it across her body.
The needle flashed and disappeared. A north*

wind flashed by the screen. The map of North-
ern California fluttered, rested. It hung
over the chair, replacing his body,
taunting him with knowledge of California’s
roads—pavement fading under its yellow
sun. The lot of the curtain.

He wrests the curtain
from atop its frame. The north
sky, squarely exposed. Large, yellow
roses crumpled—roses that once hung
unnoticed in California.
He curled the cloth around his body,

lowered himself. The paper—creased beneath body
weight. No seam—just the severed edge of the curtain.
The hem—mended again and again in California—
undone, just north
of the map’s flat Sierra Nevadas. There it hung
obligingly from hillsides, its roses far less yellow

than the chair that never sat in California. Outside, the North
Star appeared. The curtain—
inert—never to be re-hung. Absent his grasp, the map turned yellow.