**Option 1: “Letting Go” by Pamela Painter**

I’m standing at the south rim of the Grand Canyon taking photographs of florid purple striations, of undulating rock that sinks to alarming depths. Soon I must stop. It is almost checkout time at my hotel, and I want to take a tub and use all their emollients, a habit my ex deplored. When a young couple approaches to ask if I would please take their photograph, I want to say, do I look like the Park photographer? This happens to me everywhere—in the Boston Gardens, at the Band Shell on the Charles, among the Cape’s dunes. Always a couple in love—like this couple in their multipocket hiking shorts and sturdy Clarks. I let my Nikon dangle from the beaded lanyard round my neck, and take their fancy smart phone, heeding their instructions. “You were always a good listener,” my ex once said, “but sometimes you have to let things go.” I line the couple up in front of the Canyon’s distant north rim, its bronze wall aglow. I wave them to the right a bit. Joined at the hip, they sidle right. As I nod and press the button, they are probably thinking I am a good photographer. Then I motion for them to step toward me for another photo. Unaccountably, they shuffle two steps back—and disappear with scrabbling sounds and tiny shrieks. Then no sound at all. I whirl around for help but there is no one in sight. On my hands and knees, I peer over the cliff’s edge, but it hides the floor far below. As if to assure myself that they were once here, I look at their photographs. They are young, expectant, with squinty smiles against the morning sun. There are two backdrops, then a blur. Breathe, I remind myself. I set the phone on a wooden bench for someone to find. It is the only evidence the three of us were here.

**What is the central tension in the story and how is it resolved? Which side is privileged at the end and how do you know?**

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| The story revolves around the tension between the narrator’s habit of being a good listener and their need, but inability to, let things go, primarily their relationship with an ex. Letting things go is probably privileged, but neither side is resolved. |

**How is language (repetition, figurative language, diction, or other literary devices) being used in this story? How does it add to the MOWAW?**

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| The symbolism of the couple falling off the cliff displays the narrator’s relationship with their ex. |

**How is the story structured, and how does that add to the MOWAW?**

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| The structure is plain and short, emphasizing the narrator’s lack of care. When the couple falls off the cliff the narrator continues in the same indifferent tone, displaying a lack of care for the relationship which the couple that falls represents. |