

Taking the Train of Singularity South from Midtown

As the funnel of everyone in Times Square *42nd St.*

cascades down the station stairs,

pace and urgent purpose damming

briefly at turnstiles before cleaving

into streams for an 8th or 7th Avenue

train, an A Train, the Two,

and while quick, diverged currents, hot

and breathless, pick platforms, stop

to listen for slivering steel drums

in the wait for translation to work or home,

here, at the side of a narrow island

forty feet under ground,

with a wind-rush and rattle that drive

away agile, enterprising mice,

Ett Tag, Bir Tren,

Mmoja Treni, Een Trein,

Premier Train, Jeden Trenovat,

the red One Train halts

And the mustered public, potluck, steps

forward, hushed and obscure, hips

shifting at doors in slide-by
witness, separate bodies white
and yellow, brown, black and tan,
pocked or whiskery, whiskeyed, wan,
green, gray, big or bone-house,
the meek, mouthy, angry, lost -
a tourist who trails maps and binoculars
jamming last onto the crowded car.
App-trance and defensive doze,
deft conventions of eye and elbow
mind the tribes. A breath brushes
your strapping hand. The platform passes.

Tumbled from the scrum of Penn Station,
a handsome hardboy's followed by nuns,
louche in blue loafers, who start
with the tame tourist, a fresh mark,
move to a laptop on a clenched lap,
a plugged hummer, a patient cop,
smiling saints who panhandle
the parish – a buxom beauty who pulls
open her purse, offering slowly

34th Street

to a witness of rapt women as she throws

dimes into the can, clink, clink:

“The thing of it is, here’s the thing,

the reason. The reason being: yes.”

Eyes rise to *Viva Las Vegas!*,

Absolut, a scratched *Cadbury* ad:

Amy + Elvis – together at last.

Morning unfolds. A uniformed girl,

28th St.

perfumed and war-painted, twirls

on arrival, greets the hardboy’s attitude

with a teasing parade of school plaid,

half-and-half harlot, ingénue

in salsa, sour grape, Tabu,

Opined widely by a man who makes

23rd St.

his mute partner blush back,

a blonde by the busty *mater*, opposite

his signing hands and the black habits,

an icon-minded, common commute

flourishing below Fashion Avenue

in GAP and caps, Jets, Giants,

Puma, Nike and tapestry pants,

N.Y.F.D.,

by the sexy matron, Sibyl who speaks
with sly and cryptic, wisecrack sadness:

“A known fact: apart, anonymous,”

18th St.

during a door delay in which a pigeon
engaged in a serious moral mission,
preens onto the car, the pride of Chelsea,
an urban bird who avoids the eyes
of travelers, they in turn avoiding the bird
behind the pickets of print and posture.

The nuns, surrounded by trousers, smile.

The bumpkin, gaze behaving, smiles.

The worldly pigeon, a positive nodder,
fronts the speechless woman who figures
food with a brown bag at her knees,
and witness-wise, dim as destiny,
fate or whateverhappenshappens,
eats seeds from her open hand.

Lights flicker. The train, in fits,
limps to the Village, St. Vincent's.
The sage woman, staring intently
at a dark wood of girders and graffiti,
bristles, bosom and big rings:
"The rebuttal's love, my dear. Longing."
The cars start. Peeper skewers
to *Viagra*, *Visit the Brooklyn Zoo*,
listens to chatter blend with brat-
happy prattle, the porn plot
girl who giggles like tickling and sways,
sailor, to the rock and roll of the train,
mix with tin clinks of a can's
conjured coins, the cluck of nuns,
whole rests from the help-meet
whose pigeon pecks at sunflower seeds,
a tightly fused and Ives-like
Suite for City in Clickety-Clack.

14th Street

At Christopher, a drunk curses Christ,
easy credit, his mother, the Mets,
warns of the end of the world and laughs.
No one gets on, no one off.

Christopher St.

Houston St.

The train stops short of Houston,
stops in the sealed tunnel. Engines
stop, dull lights die
as bodies breathe an undivided sigh.
Lights on. Off. Tense
whispers worm a blind silence,
stage stripped to underlying time,
a long, long loss of light.
When a Zippo's flicked at the far end
of the car, the steely woman sends
down a candle, the candle slowly
returned in grudging transfer, glow
soft on the row of stoic handlers,
godgift and galoot, gangbanger,
faces awake in dark, driven
epiphany, grace held and given.
The hardboy's forehead flames with lipstick.

The blowzy bird runs from a kick.
Lights. Jerk of cars. Lurch.
Shoes shuffle, buttocks touch,
breasts and elbows, *corps de ballet*
in brave, awkward, standing balance.

During the stop's shift and witness,
the school girl, in gimmick innocence,
leaves with hardboy and his target heart.
"Scratch and match! Tartan. Tats."
The bird, confident that symbol can solve
for self, takes a seat after Canal.

Canal St.

At Franklin, it's good-bye to the bum, who rises
with help from the hardy nuns, good-bye
to the coupled signers who nod and stand,
fire quiet hand-in-hand.

Franklin St.

Riders, their rides ending or begun,
are off and on, fungible, one.
You, with your field glasses and guides,
you become everyone too, beside
yourself in witless, wondering joy,
no longer alone, no longer on the way.

Chambers St.

Ett Tag, Bir Tren,

Mmoja Treni, Een Trein...

One: existing whole in a sphere,

a numen or essence and no more.

The reason? The reason being: yes,

the breath and brush of necessary witness,

superposition of drunk and dove,

an oracle, blue loafers, love

struck in fugitive communion, our close

going on the warm, coincident cars.