

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/3

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Down The Northeast Corridor

Pulling Out Of The Station

"A full train," they announce –
how virtuous. The car rides smoothly,
the morning rain has passed.
Ball fields, tract houses,
the occasional school or church,
a shuttered mill, a patch
of undeveloped green space.
Suddenly, a prison, razor wire and all.
What cruel punishment – a cell
with this view of movement.
Surprise: "A couple of minutes
To Providence." Now things are more
Industrialized, save for the inevitable mall.
First stop on a grand journey.

Connecticut Emerges

Thicker, masking habitation,
Considerable houses –
Why don't I ever think of this
As a resort country?

Unexpected Birdwatching

Seeking a level roadbed,
The tracks hug the shoreline –
Acquiescent beaches and yacht clubs
on one side, salt marsh on the other.
Blobs of white – trash bags?
No, egrets, flocking modestly,
indifferent to the mechanical.

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Into Jersey

Full sun and cloud sculpture
Over the flat New Jersey landscape
Of truck gardens and used car lots.
Glimpses of water, and overhead
The sequence of bridges
Leading to True Shore.
A predictable shrieking infant
Crank up to full volume,
Over the susurrus
Of cell phone conversations

Delaware

Manifest irrelevance.
Nobody even knows its capital.
Topography – nil.
Then the surprising magnificence
of the bay, flat calm, dotted
with occasional fishermen,
shore tied to water
by oddly fragile, oddly hesitant docks.

Next Stop, Baltimore

Another ancestral place –
I know those row houses.
I'm certain it's a steam bath out there.
Past city limits, the foliage
Is nearly tropical.

The Last Leg

Announcements about some schedule confusion,
a slowdown. "We'll just ease into Union Station."
More like amble, or mope. The customary anticipation
Arises – I'm now officially late, more than ready

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To disembark. Take inventory of my gear –
The downside of avoiding
the strait limits on airline baggage is
permission to take what suitcases
muscles bear.

Arrived

Compact quarters – no space, really
To unpack. The bliss
Of living out of a suitcase.
Time to take stock. Socks, undies
Pajamas. But hold on minute:
Where the hell's my return ticket.
I'm certain – left on the train.
How large the poet's wisdom:
The art of losing isn't hard to master.
For some, a vocation,
same as priest or lawyer.