

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/2

g emil reutter
Just This Night

The long linear rails gleam under moon's light, cling to worn cement ties with rusted fingers of clips encased in the dusty ballast. I work here, look for suspicious activity walk from Broad to Kennsington past hulking buildings of the past, under and over bridges. I see the shadows listen for ghostly sounds.

Junkies flee the weeds
needles litter the ground, vandals drop spray cans, run up the embankment, burnt out Chevy leans on a hill. Not a terrorist in site. I am a quarter mile in; feel old, back aches shoulders and knees creak, I watch the steam escape from my lips cut fence-mesh flaps in the wind.

There are no freight cars on sidings adjacent to crumbling buildings, vacant lots where Bunting, Nabisco, Erie Steel, Flexible Flyer once stood. The large yard at the old Philco Plant is empty. Mimosa, weeds, hills of tires.

*In shadows I see freight cars
butting up against the loading docks hear sounds of the furnaces tapped,
bending of aluminum and riveting of bunting, smell crackers in the ovens
repetitive sounds of the large looms blending textiles, rhythm of the production
line at Philco. I see the old railroad bulls checking seals on freights ready to
ship product out, a line of freights wait with new supplies. My body creaks as
I walk by buildings with tumbling brick, past the smell of the old slaughter house.*

The radio crackles; I climb down the hill at Kennsington Avenue, a group of hookers takes off as the black blazer pulls up. I climb in, light up a red 100: depart unlike the others just for this night.