

Pained in the blue seat, pained in the red seat

Text from *The Hudson Lines*, © 2014 by Sarah Heady

The train creeps through the tunnel, bodily creaks. How a human skeleton sounds, dances between air and bone. But in this case steel, in this case concrete, grease. Sunlight through a grate spills onto a pile of dust: blood-light of the air up there, epicenter of the world. Speed picks up. AC starts. I am stained in several places on my outer-shirt. From somewhere an unearthly sound. Just the everyday gears.

There is still a reason to fear. Barbed wire lining, my ears plugged. The Palisades, military-loved, on the opposite shore. Yonkers substation. Where I will keep you going. Where I will let things go on their own, downhill if they must. Romanesque form of the factory, an emulation born of despair. A blue replacement, blue of river and sky, an unused pavilion. I love this. And I love this. And I love this all.

If people lived here, it was because the land was good. If people came here, it was because the land was good. Better than home. If people stayed here it was because they were good. They deserved the good land. If people did bad things here, it was only because the land was so good. If people did bad things to the land, they were trying to make it feel like home. A good home. Only because the good people loved the land. If the good people turned the land bad, it's because the land resisted. If the land resisted, it's because the people were not good people after all. The land turned bad, the people turned bad, and the people left. The people left a bad land.

Orphaned bridge: the tiniest reason to open. Open me. Scarified weather this March. Come to evenness. Rarified halo of reason surrounding thought, lining of broken ice and piles of options. So here, categorized into here, there, here, them, us, last stop on the line. The low rise means not many mansions. Prol homes instead. And icehouses. Homes for the inept. The criminally insane. The indigent negroes. The unwed mothers. The plaid-shirted greenhorns. The filing clerks. The blandfaced commuters. The travelers.

Pained in the blue seat, pained in the red seat. Stiff in the neck. Concrete factory. So bleed there, you can't see the river, bleed there, can't see the river, split by a ridge, fancying morning, split by a ridge, you come to outbuildings via inbuildings, you, the widest span, my hand as wing, the tunnel as what can never be said, my tiny spur, my unbuilt access point, my pile of bone, tire and driftwood fronting the tracks, and the flock of birds that would have scattered either way as we passed them, they are so used to the sound of the train.