

Brakeman's Song (final)

s.tinley

The years pass me on parallel rails
singing a song of tired steel.
Ah, to jump a train that refused time,
beg the brakeman for less coal on that fire,
and listen to the conductor's sound:

 "Saint James, last stop El Camino."
Waiting for the next station,
hours ticking past my patience.
A vericose nose pressed to looking glass,
watching a palette of life peel away.

I want the train's jolt to sweep my shoes,
to drag my heels so that I can feel...
 my drift between each narrow rail,
 my years between each clackity-clack.

"Brakeman, brakeman pull that leather line.
Pull that horn for the children wandering, wondering..."
And pull it for me brakeman, please.

I'd like to jump a backwards train
so that I could tell those little rails
to press fresh cheeks against glass
to watch how the farmer's seeds are sewn.

For they too will be a crop harvested,
cursing time,
 digging rooted heels of their own.