

24 Hours in Autumn Through the Eyes of a Suburbanite

Clickety-clack, clickety-clack ...
Journey to the Big Shoulders,
carried swiftly through the portal,
encased in steel.

Tic-toc.
Across from Wrigley,
we skip the gum-infested sidewalk.
Tonight's a clubbing date
pay to stand for a five-hour sound assault.
Come early to lean on a rail;
in the crush, you'll stand, regardless.

At our piece of rail we lean and listen ...
immature country rantings,
a voice like an angel,
the sound of mud,
the pain of white light,
caustic fake smoke.

My legs throb.
The angel's voice distracts the pain.
Sadly, she departs.

Smiling cabbie takes us to our beds
past a sleeping lake encased in black velvet.
Not even the stars are visible.
Sirens scream through the night;
nineteen floors up we lie suspended.

Clickety-clack, clickety-clack...
Hissing back through the portal. Hush, breathe.

Tic-toc.
Arboretum, Morton's forest dream,
oasis in the sea of asphalt and strips.
Escape to the far corners,
to ditch the leaf-peeping throngs.

Ashes with their yellow leaves the first to fall,
nearly naked now a hint of what's to come.
Larches shower russet needles in the gale.
Maples stately in their reds and golds,
tired leaves clinging for another week.
Chartruse ginkgo, friendly mini-fans waving.
All against the backdrop of cerulean and mare's tails.

Screaming blue jay—startled and scolding.
Squirrels rummaging, gathering, barking as we pass.
Cranes gargling far overhead; arguing over the way home.

Ignored, the prairie pouts its palette of neutrals.
Future generations rattle in the breeze.

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