

DONNA VORREYER

Purgatory

When the train goes by, it will rattle the trees
like a great wind come down from the mountains
though there are no mountains here

still the wind is brute and biting, and it shivers
everything as it rushes by the darkening
windows of the passenger car

and everything is untranslatable, like I am watching a foreign
film with no subtitles, but I cannot tell if I'm missing anything
because so far no one has said anything,

it's just trees and landscape and a small boy staring out a window
dotted with condensation—wait, now someone has spoken
and it is not a language I understand—

and this is what the train feels like, near dusk and rocking
on the old tracks, rocking back and forth so hard
that I can barely write, and I feel disoriented,

locked in a reality where I don't belong,
one of movement and bustle and voices who are
not speaking to me and even if they were,

I wouldn't understand them,
unlike the howl of the wind which I can hear over
the rumble of the train, and I understand it perfectly,

how it just wants to run and run and not stay anywhere,
how it speaks only in whispers, how it wants to
move through and around and into everything.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Donna Vorreyer is the author of *A House of Many Windows* (Sundress Publications 2013), *Every Love Story is an Apocalypse Story* (Sundress Publications 2016), and *The Girl* (Porkbelly Press 2018). Her work has appeared in *Waxwing*, *Diode*, *Glass*, *RHINO*, and *Poet Lore*. A middle school teacher, Donna also serves as a staff reviewer for *RHINO* and *Stirring*. She lives in the Chicago suburbs and can be found online at www.donnavorreyer.com.

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