ON THE EVENING EXPRESS

With a wall of their building gone, four or five

bundled-up urchins pee from a stack of planks

and, grinning, wave toward the elevated tracks

as we rocket past. And all’s in a sapphire light—

those kids, billboards for gin, Hakeem’s Tattoos

with windows shattered although guarded by grates,

and a court of pigeons where schoolgirls promenade.

Still, most would rather riffle through the news

than watch this barbwire neighborhood grow dark.

Most of us settle into our cushioned seats,

blinking at fine print; or stretch, bored.

One hour from now we’ll come on snow-white parks

and houses nestled in clumps of evergreen.

We fly with sparks, careering through the cold.