

New poems

by Rachel Hadas

The train

Present into future: bold, bathed, new,
also familiar, a déjà vu.
Wait. Something I had never thought to see
again clanks forward from obscurity—
that creaky train I'd once been riding on,
a journey slow and grim.
Hasn't that train left the station?
In what dim railyard has it been hidden, waiting?
And do I have to climb back on again?
The train rolls past. Spring sun
touches the sealed windows caked with grime.
And though I am a passenger in time
I watch it passing and do not get on.

—*Rachel Hadas*

Fast ride

The West Side Highway morphs to verdant lawn,
with brown-gold patches (horse manure? a barn?),
lush green track down which we are careering
faster and faster, and no one is steering
or even driving: no hands on the wheel.
I scream. It comes out tinny and unreal.
No anger. Unaccountably, no fear.
Laughter. Leaping barricades, the car
plunges into the Hudson, down down down
through strange clear water. Does this mean we drown?
How frail it is, the guard rail in between
day and night, the waking and the dream,
the vertical where our waking hours are spent,
the horizontal that tells us what they meant.

—*Rachel Hadas*