

GLENN HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
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7:15 REGULARS

The commuter train broke down
pulling out of Suburban Heights.
Some of us fill a bus aisle, some walk back
to the station to fidget with stranded metaphors.

Daily we board morning habit, propelling us
noisily to the city. It never fails
like fatigued metal or electrical parts,
never crashes like overloaded computers.

Fellow faces are pressed in our gray matter
like celebrity handprints in Hollywood cement.
For years we've made the same run to Chicago
and back, five days a week,
learning each other's names after it was clear
we were trained partners,
riding, ridden, driven to prescribed spaces,
steel wheels incidental to the process.

Now we fill the nearest ears with growls about
appointments missed. Some of us almost touch
the possibility of skipping the rest. One of us
quips that a day off is just the ticket we need.

In the dark siding of cerebral tunnels
we're informed our absence would not alter
the planet's orbit; our shoulders could
unclench for a day, maybe two.

But opiates of indispensability are not
what fuel this engine. We find generic conceits
elastic enough to cover uncertainty, quiet
the vibrato of why. Rising like saliva
of Pavlov's dogs, the hidden imperative
expands its premises. Hearing impaired, we
respond only to the next train's boarding call.