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24 Hours in Autumn Through the Eyes of a Suburbanite

Jill Spealman

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.