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Interlude, Union Station

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INTERLUDE, UNION STATION

Pat Brown

WASHROOMS FOR
RAILROAD PATRONS
ONLY

TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED

AMTRAK POLICE

Are they uniformed?,
I wondered, glancing
furtively over my shoulder,
or plainclothes, perhaps,
so as not to spook transgressors? —
I tried hard not to stare
at a seedy old boy
in a blue poplin jacket
two urinals down to the left.

Would they storm the place
in a lightning raid?
I imagined rough hands
on my arms from behind —
not even a chance to tuck myself in? —
slamming me into that filmy wall,
demanding my ticket — *Honest,*
I was just on my way to the
Burlington window! — then
stumbling me out to the concourse &
pitching me into a stream
of wall-eyed commuters
where — dancing for balance,
still unzipped — I'd hear
a youngster's voice shrill
"Mommy, look! That man was
being bad in the bathroom!"
above the soft chuckling
of dutiful Amtrak Police
melting in the crowd.