

## The Fire Tender's Path

where winter trees funnel  
and munitions once made war

but now we make love instead;  
where nuthatches shrill

next to where bricks were made and moved,  
unmade again; and trout dwell in unnatural pools;

where we bramble and ramble and amble;  
and two stop for joy while the sun

rests on the fallow ascent;  
where twin wheels rose emancipated

from their metal pasture;  
where a river runs deep underneath

the hangman's trail,  
and red shrapnel rained down.



## New Orleans to Vancouver: a railway journey

Eighty-eight hours, three thousand miles, four Amtrak trains  
trailer homes line up on the wrong side of the tracks  
Sunset Limited, Starlight Coast, Amtrak Cascades  
red dusk falls over glass skyscrapers

trailer homes line up on the wrong side of the tracks  
the constant horn alerts level crossing drivers of our approach  
red dusk falls over glass skyscrapers  
evergreens turn to dust

the constant horn alerts level crossing drivers of our approach  
on open plains, livestock graze free range  
evergreens turn to dust  
Mexico a stone's throw over a brown metal fence

on open plains, livestock graze free range  
Joshua trees stand to attention  
Mexico a stone's throw over a brown metal fence  
lightning forks over the Arizona sunset

Joshua trees stand to attention  
crows surround a lifeless cow  
lightning forks over the Arizona sunset  
palm trees wait for our arrival

crows surround a lifeless cow  
breakers roll in over forgotten footprints  
palm trees ignore our departure  
tandem dolphins swim past the window

breakers roll in over forgotten footprints  
impossible cliffs defend gold rush memories  
tandem dolphins swim past the window  
mists cloak the pacific crest trail, white-washing their peaks

impossible cliffs defend gold rush memories  
redwoods become evergreen  
mists blanket sea-level trails, white-washing the horizon  
a creek runs alongside, racing us

redwoods become evergreen  
Sunset Limited, Starlight Coast, Amtrak Cascades  
a creek runs alongside, racing us  
eighty-eight hours, three thousand miles, four train journeys.



## 5am Storm

Coffee black sky  
chalk smudge moon  
a fierce timpani  
crashes and  
double-edged shards  
charge downwards  
ahead of  
the infinite cavalry.



Polite request from the management: Please do not feed the birds

Transparent borders wrap around the ornamental playground,  
feet march past non-stop all day, muddying the carpet  
but not their souls, leaving empty spaces to go cold,  
parasols protect coffee drinkers from grey  
but not from each other, silently they  
turn away preferring their phones for  
company, pretending not to  
notice the baby sparrows  
eat their discarded crumbs  
while in trees prey play  
claxons, also  
no smoking  
allowed  
here.