

Goin' Downtown

Ridin' the B-train

rockin and clatterin

'bove Chi-ca-go.

People comin' from where they came from

and headed wherever.

But I'm goin Downtown

On the B-train.

Hustlin' along

car swayin'

wheels clatterin

frown growin'

as, with each stop,

the hoods grow dingier

and more dilapidated.

Rattlin' by soot-caked second-story windows

set in mortarless walls.

Perrin' thru broken windows,

some with no pane at all.

Wincin' at cardboard-covered windows,

saggin' four-story wooden back porches,

tarred roof-tops strewn with litter

guarded by tilting chimneys.

Below, grass-less yards sparklin' with shards of glass,

vacant lots full of abandoned jalopies,

rusty shopping carts,

and crops of ragweed.

And there they are,

brown men

loungin' on back stoops

wearin' stocking caps

and sweat-stained T-shirts,

beside rag-headed women

whose aprons covered ample bellies.

The noddin' their heads and the gestures of their hands.

says something I don't understand.

Rumblin' by

on the B-train

is as close as I come.

-Mark D. Morrison-Reed