

Eyes Alive

Shimmery light
colors in the day or night,
sparkle in the women's skirt
fire up the atmosphere
red lipstick
metal tube,
multi flocked dress,
hatless,
one delicate shoe rests.

What time is it?

Cavernous light
reaches back
pulls sunshine
to the front
fills the void,
the emptiness
halo from behind
cab hurtling towards the sun.

Two women talk,
one unmarried,
maybe
one not
ring hand hidden,
eyes eager shy
beneath the hat
sit close, tell secrets,
tales about men,
love and romance.

S curve couples on the left.

The man leans in
on the compact
mirror's reflection
a sneak peak
the heated glance
a stranger makes
who is lonely
who sees
a young pretty girl
curled over

applying lipstick
on the tram,
alone and hatless
hence,
in need of protection
or flowers
to reflect her beauty back
dreams between strangers
who never know
what affect they have.

But eyes don't lie
they tell stories untold,
desires unknown
passing thoughts
predicament of those
with vision
those lucky enough
to see.

His say to her, pretty lady, look at me.

Behind them a couple
with clothes to match
but not skin tones,
share a newspaper
both sharp
they lean in
heads cocked
read the fine print
they aren't afraid
to share space
S curve grace
an inch away
they are comfortable
her eyes shine black.

Across the way
resting his eyes
between gigs or home,
a musician
with a tiny 'stache
holds his violin
while sleeping
a professional
with a bow tie,

white shirt,
shiny black shoes
and suit to match,
reflects the hues
of the car's purple glow
casts him in this timeless role.

You can tell class by clothes in this painting.

Next to him, several inches away
a man with slanted eyes
and sturdy work clothes
reads a magazine,
his Popeye-like
forearms bulge,
there is no tiredness here,
though tired bones hold strength,
he alone,
sits on the edge of his seat
young man, blue shirt
ready for whatever comes next,
his sideburns reach
beseech like his long fingers.

Lovers sit
behind them,
he whispers
sweet nothings
into her ear
they aren't wearing
hats in this scene
his arm around her
he holds her close,
only they exist
they almost kiss,
her hair shines
back at him,
her face glows,
the woman standing
facing them
holding the pole,
closes her eyes
pretends not
to look, listen or know
but every part of her is tense
from the effort of not looking.

There is looking in not looking.

Even with lids closed
the eyes reach out
from the picture
and claim,
I am, I was,
I did once exist,
and this is proof
of my existence.
They say don't forget
about me or us
or my sacrifices
and this is where
we come together
best in mass transit,
the worst off, the best off
the working girl,
the country bloke
the lovers,
the musicians
the men in hats and suits,
the women who know,
the men who don't,
here we meet, greet,
and saunter though time
and space together
read the paper, rest,
all shades, pay grades
and sexes,
it makes sense,
here we are equal,
see what beauty
we can make
when all is lit up with color
warm and welcoming,
beckoning you into the picture,
offering you a seat.

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Ekphrastic Poem in response to Lily Furedi's painting entitled, *Subway*, circa 1934.
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from the collection *Love in War Time*