

Christine Lavin, Waiting for the 'B' Train

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Miscellaneous

Waiting for the 'B' Train

I dropped a token into the slot.

Pushed through the turnstile.

There was a woman at the end of the platform

Waiving her arms around, kind of wild.

"Come here," she wailed. "There's a puppy on the rails.

I think it has been hurt."

I raced down to where she was pointing

to see a ball of fur covered with dirt.

"It must be dead," I said to her,

as I turned to leave.

"No, it's alive," she cried. "Just before you got here,

I swear, I saw it breath."

"And I'll watch for the train if you'll jump down.

Pick him up and hand it to me.

If we take him to the vet, if we save his life,

Think how wonderful that'll be."

I looked into the tunnel, there was no train in sight.

I looked at the furry thing sitting there, a truly pitiful sight

"Look," I said. "I'm not sure that's a puppy.

Could be a lice-infested, long-haired rat.

And it's gotta be dead, so I'm not jumping down,"

and I figured that that was that.

But by now more people arrived on the platform, and she said,

"Help. There's a puppy on the tracks."

They looked for a moment, and like true New Yorkers,

collectively turned their backs.

She said, "Somebody's got to do something,"

As we slowly turned around again.

"Someone must have the courage to save him.

It's a puppy. It's man's best friend."

"Trains come through here every few minutes."

Said a man wearing madras pants.

"And it's way too dangerous. You'd have to be nuts,

to take such a foolish chance."

But the woman was insistent. "In the time we've been debating,"

She said "One of you could've jumped down.

Handed him to me, by now that puppy could be

at the animal shelter cross town!"

We felt bad, but no one would do it.

Then a transit cop appeared.

Down at the other end of the platform

We all yelled "Hey you! Come here!"

He ran to us, I pointed to the train tracks and said,

"See that thing, furry, not too big.

What do you think it is, he looked and said,...

"What? You mean that wig?"

We stepped back. A rush of embarrassment swept right through the crowd.

Accented by the blast of a train whistle,

Approaching and growing quite loud.

The "B" train flattened that furry thing.

We got on board, went on our way.

Grateful that we did not risk our lives
to save a life of a wig that day.

So if you see something on the train tracks,
Take a tip from me.
Don't let anybody talk you into saving it,
It's best to just let it be.
And if you see a person wearing
what looks like a puppy on their head,
Don't call the police, it's only a wig,...

..and chances are it's already dead.