

Peter Hammill, Traintime

Along the tracks the wires are humming
in bursts of code like far-off drums.
Fathering the message:
further up the line someone's shouting
down the passage of time.

The corridor restrains the window,
no view without the eye within.
Bold upon the threshold
but holding on the line
we're shouting down the passage of time.

Relatives speak on the phone, on the train,
talking before they have thought to explain;
voices pitched wildly on tracks in the night
can't pick the pace up...
oh let there be light!
How light becomes the soul.

You know yourself the centre of attention,
you see yourself the locus of event.
I'm sorry if it's painful quarrying the lime,
stage centre,
shouting down the passage of time.

The corridor retains its shadows,
its secrets compartmentalised.
Damping down on ambience,
clamp the teeth and grind,
shouting down the passage of time.

What's there to see or make clear?
What's there to know when the voice is right here?
What's there to promise or vow?
What's to believe, when the time is right now?

Relatives spoke on the phone, on the train,
talking before they had sought to refrain;
voices projected, spears in mid-flight
frozen forever...
oh let there be light!