

# MARIA ZAHLE

FLASH 500

TURNING THE KEY SLOWLY

Turning the key slowly I make sure the bolt doesn't clank too loudly in its casing. I check my bag for wallet, tickets.

*Down the track. The cold metal. The movement. Speed. Modernity and trains, steam engines. Monet's train at St. Lazare.*

I don't look right and down the narrow street. It's a dead end. I heard a yelp, was it a dog? Or perhaps a cat? I fear it was someone. Not an animal. I think: assault, a fight. It is very dark. My steps are soft but audible on the glossy pavement. I am completely alone, nothing moving except for a bus passing at the end of the road. Last night it rained.

*How it might feel touching the rail. Smooth on top, splintered perhaps on the sides. The rocks between the tracks black from exhaust. Wooden slabs connecting the rail. The trees cut down for this. A memory appears, of playing between the tracks near the dunes, excitement of this restricted space, clearly distinct from its surroundings. The smell of lyme grass.*

The station is illuminated with fluorescent lights. A man passes by in a cloud of perfume, there are leather patches on his jacket shoulder; he is walking calmly down the ramp.

*Shape into lines. Where is the repetition? Smooth rail, sliding a hand along the cool metal, the splinters in my hand. Hand, metal rail, movement.*

Hi  
Hi. What can I get you?  
Can I have please the apple blackberry plum and...  
Granola?  
Yes the  
Just say the second one  
Yes the... thank you. And an Earl Grey tea with milk

*Cool metal  
Slide slide slide  
Cool metal  
Let it slide  
Let it slide  
Right before  
The train rolls in  
Slide slide slide  
Let it slide*

As the doors pull open I jump off and start to run  
Right away I feel the sweat  
While the air is frosty, dry  
Up the hill, uphill all the way

*BBR RRRRR RRRRRR RR RR  
BRR RRRRR RRRRRR RR RR  
RRR RRRRR RRRRRR RR RR  
Feel the skin of the palm of your hand  
Stretch out and touch the cool metal  
Slide your hand along the rail  
Let it slide let it slide let it slide.*

They are waiting for me  
Lined up, all lined up  
One long-haired boy is late  
Heavy metal T-shirt, single-strap backpack  
He hesitates but then sits down, throwing his hair across his head

*Sssshch  
Chk Chk Chk  
Chk Chk chk chk chk  
Sssshch  
Chk Chk Chk  
Chk Chk chk chk chk  
Slow approach  
Slow slow  
Dry, sand, dry, sand  
Slow slow  
Your hand your hand  
The skin is twitching  
To touch to touch  
The cool cool metal*

*Stretch it out stretch it  
Feel the smooth  
Before you return  
The cool cool metal*

*Let it slide slide slide  
Let it slide slide slide  
Let it slide let it slide let it slide*

*And then you run  
And then we run and then we run and then we run  
And then we run  
I begin*