

Douglas Collura

Split-Station Commute

“His mind was a train wreck of voices.”

~ posting by a psychiatrist on
CouchtoCouch.org

I.

Little hops down subway steps pump
my heart strong. *If it's arrhythmic,
death kicks in, but stay positive.*

I swipe card/heft briefcase/knock
turnstile forward with knee. *Anyone
who falls onto the tracks and burns
calories clawing up must be your hero.*

Some stare into the hole to bring the train
faster, but at platform's end, I point
my eyes toward the future. *Rats
nose in that darkness, Nostradamus.*

Waiting, I read a guy stole fire.
*Immortality equals boredom. That's why
the gods are so antsy.* Bodies of hair,
torsos of shoulder bags, out—I'm in,
energy feeding energy. *Matter
rushing each other toward extinction.*

Pole in hand, steel squeaking, stop
next lit shelf of people; thirty-seven
flights to my fingers tapping the keyboard.
*Dancers love expressing gravity. You
type "equity derivatives." By noon,
a men's room stall, you nod out.*

II.

It's night, Doc. The subway. I'm seated between
two arguers crowding me. One says,
“Best way to travel.” The other, “If you
love darkness and dirt.” I wear
their spit, their poking fingers. The train
races their crazy voices, too much
speed for the curve. Screech, boom,
crash. Can you cut through jagged metal,
Doc? Lead out through tunnel smoke?
Do we all have to survive? Will I?

Douglas Collura is author of the spoken-word CD *The Dare of the Quick World* and the book *Things I Can Fit My Whole Head Into*. His work has appeared in *The Alembic*, *Many Mountains Moving*, *2Bridges Review*, and elsewhere.