

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 22

June 2011

Terminal

Will Cordeiro

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

Recommended Citation

Cordeiro, Will (2011) "Terminal," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 22.

Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol11/iss1/22>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Cordeiro: Terminal

TERMINAL



WILL CORDEIRO

Our Greyhound downshifts to a chuffed-out grind.
A shock of lights awake the eyes of strangers
Who've slumped on one another's shoulders
Across three states, holding duffles in their laps,
Their temples rattled on a pane of glass.
They grab their jumbled packs from overhead
And stumble off, vegetal, out the gate,
Shuffle darkened streets leading to the harbor
Or slumber through the tunnels or the slums,
To Meadowlands beyond these storied heights.
I left a girl and job here what seems a life
Ago. Holidays done, I'm going back home.
Yeah, missed connection. 11:20's
Last chance to transfer, so a gaunt white cop
Has grumbled. Can't sleep in Port Authority.
Best get a room, son. First bus leaves six sharp.
The hollow station echoes when he turns;
I glimpse—before he's gone—his flimsy badge
Flash Knight's Security. Subways howl below.
I hoist the deadweight of my lumpy bag,
Avoid the shit-dump bum crouched on the floor,
And figure I can find an after-hours
Bar nearby, which leaves me with some time
To kill. I wander up 9th Avenue
Until I find a godforsaken hole-
In-the-wall between the rubble, plywood, brace

Of scrambling beneath some overpass.
The bartender, in a lacy bra and cut-
Offs which show a little sag of ass, ignores
My sober presence on the stool. A large
Bubba with a harelip shouts "Skunk, Over,"
To get a beer half head. Another man down
The end cradles his face, then moves the crook
Of his locked arms a space, comes up to smoke,
Giving me the eye. A fool keeps punching
Buttons on the busted juke and feeding it
More coins while someone else adjusts a radio.
I fondle grubby glasses and pretend to read;
Half-smudged, "Half-off Specal 2nite is Shot."
I see the man beyond the mirror's end
Is blind; the clock I've studied hasn't moved
All night. There's nothing here that works, but all
Make due somehow as if they owe a debt
Of gratitude to forces which have kept
Them up this long. When last call comes, I pitch
Out, breathing in the ruddy smear of dawn
By the transport depot in exhausted clouds
And feel each minute drain away the stars.