

THE EMPIRE BUILDERS

by

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Atop the train, one golden solar rake

Bursts through a wall of trees far from lush,

Revealing a three-wall handiwork of boys.

Suddenly a voyeur, I see the treehouse they thought clandestine,

A hangar for their pigeon-flutter thoughts.

The open frame for the fourth wall, abandoned,

Butts the green-sloughed wilderness that bears the makings of a project

Through a window pane and to my imagination.

I squint to resolve the amorphous objects of industry

That they have cast upon the platform of castaway railroad ties.

But a bluegrey heap is all I draw from one swiveling gaze.

Parallax pulls me forward—the hangar is gone.

(Perhaps someone in another car was more prepared to see the spectacle.)

Clacking beside other secret places in disheveled back yards,

Crippling the fingering digits of time,

This nostalgic train composes the overture of sleep

As I remember what boys build.