

Tangerine Epilogue

Outside the sky has gone red.
A blood-orange glow over my city's rooftops.
I'm hid in the corner, knees tucked to my chest,
stuffed rabbit beside watching window frame evening clouds.
We'll keep each other safe till the end comes.
Somewhere far off the ocean laps at the shore.
Mother's not going to make it home tonight.
The crescendo peaks in silence, a sigh of release.

"I'll always be at your side"

I look up to see a woman beside me on the train,
holding my hand. There's a gentleness to her, a
quiet yearning hid under the exhaustion of age;
her sweater smells of garden earth. I don't know
her.

Plush rabbit tucked secure under my arm, I
cautiously scan the other passengers riding with
me (*click-clack below our feet*).

An old man slouches into his seat across from
me, hat sunk low shading gruff mustache. He
looks soft as a toy bear as he naps, rustling
newspaper folded over chest.

A mother sits primly, hunched over needlework.
A gift for the daughter at her side, resting on
hip. The lines of her face are drawn taut, but her
fingers are fluid and sure. It's nearly finished.

A little boy skips down the corridor, confident
footfalls thumping in rhythm. He steals an
inquisitive glance at the new girl, proud furrow
in his brow as he grabs a support pole and falls
into a spin. He's unconcerned.

A young man dressed for work leans into car
window and looks up at the clouds, timid
wonder in his eyes, a gnawing fear at bay in his
chest beneath steady breaths and gripped
armrest. He seems so small.

I stare down at my own feet, legs swaying
slightly, not quite touching the floor. Her hand is
warm.

I look up, searching the woman's face; there's a
kindness under her practised tranquility, the
serene laugh lines of a grandmother. I'm not
afraid.

"Where am I going?", I ask.

She meets my gaze for a moment, words held
briefly on her tongue before looking away, off
beyond the traincar; it seems as if years pass
through her eyes like moments.

"The same place as all of us" she replies at last,
turning back to me with a soft smile, taking my
hand in both of hers. Her assuring warmth
betrays the sadness in her eyes.

I nod, clutching my bunny close

Outside the sky has turned red
A blood-orange radiance melting over shingled eaves
The gathered threads are snipped at final weave.
The orchestra stills at last.