

Clarinda Harriss

White Noise

He died and died before he died. That's how it is
with strokes, granted. But death and sleep, to our surprise,
didn't get along. I had to buy a box of noise
to fool our scared, scarred brains. To lullaby our eyes.
A simple toy. A set of three percussive bass
notes thumped beneath some scrapes and whooshes endlessly—
all night, at least. *Make the machine do Train*, he'd say.

Train was our favorite. I think what he heard was far-
off tracks curving through Kansas to the coast. I'd hear
the tracks racket underneath me in a Pullman bar.

He died wide-eyed. I don't turn Train on any more.
Ocean's shiftless. Breeze blows cold. Brook is near-
by plumbing, disrepaired. And all Night does is smear
some digitty crickets over *boxcar, boxcar, boxcar*.