

It's Warm and Sometimes Not on the N Train

by Danny Goodman

An older man sat across from me. I stood: the air conditioning only helped when upright beneath it.

The older man wore a midnight blue T-shirt, with the word *Certified* printed in white lettering above his heart. His silver hair fell to his shoulders and glinted under the artificial lights.

Though I didn't normally instigate conversations with strangers, I felt the impulse.

"May I ask what you're certified in?" My voice cracked, and I realized I was thirsty.

The older man smiled and revealed his crooked front teeth. "Living," he said. "Living and fucking breathing."

He chuckled, and the woman beside him joined in. It felt as if the whole train car might be in on the joke.

I reciprocated the smile and leaned back against the train door. The metal was cold, almost painful, against my hot skin.

