

Acclimation

by Justin Hamm

Before I grew used to it
I would wake to the sound
of the Amtrak whistle
echoing down along the tracks
behind our trailer park
and wonder who was hurtling where
through the dark night and across
this wide Illinois prairie
and why and with whom else
and for how long.

But this was before I grew used to it
and to the wind chimes
dangling from the front porch
and to the dogs barking
or fighting in the street
and to the occasional car engine
coughing to life at an unlikely hour.
And the laughter of teenagers
up to the best sort of no good,
their stereos pumping neon bass lines
into the black promise of the night.
This was back when
those stark graveyard hours were a time
I could still be startled
into discovering something profound.

Every year now I feel more convinced
it is no good
all this getting used to things.
Mornings, my wife asks me how I slept
and I tell her, *Fine, fine.*

Even I'm not sure what I mean.

