

# Death Along the Jersey Rails

*by* Robert Salley

Nobody falls in love near train tracks  
It's dark... where animals go to die  
and teenagers go to fuck awkwardly  
in the middle of the night.

Trees decompose more rapidly  
surrounded by gaunt bushes and  
naked to eyes on billboards  
selling real estate and promoting radio stations.

They're doused in cigarette butts and used condoms  
like old discarded snake skin  
dry and coarse after the bite  
immortally tortured by broken glass bottles.

Tattered with wayfarers walking along these rails  
footprints planted long before the rust settled in  
carrying their faded images of a childhood  
and mother's arms that could hide a shameful memory.

Filthy windows show an infomercial  
of defeated towns racing by  
with chain-link fences and taverns  
keeping the locals from escaping.

Their heads angled with regrets  
of wasted time they let slip away  
and the wasted encounters with saviors  
somewhere between New York and Trenton.

