

The Runaway Train

by Tianna Ellis

Me? I was a runaway.

The name sounded so good in my head.

Runaway.

The name itself gave me a reason.

Within it lies the whole meaning.

It gave me something to run away from by itself, concealing a hidden truth.

Hidden from listeners, on-lookers and passers-by.

And, of course, from me.

At the start of a particularly secret night, I stole away.

Where?

The path told me as I followed it.

The dot of the road on the horizon told me of such places.

The places that I would go.

With no train to take me.

I stood on the platform, staring blankly at the track.

I told him I would wait.

“Wait? For what?”

What indeed.

It was so cold, but I wasn't shivering.

I couldn't be moved.

I paced up the track.

If they would not give me a train, I would make a train of my own.

Yes, there it was.

White. White as stars.

And a hundred times as fast.

I felt that it would speed me everywhere I chose.

Places I'd never seen.

Paris, Rome, Berlin...
No, no.
Beyond them.
It would take me to the places beyond them.
The places that only me, myself and I- yours truly- would know
about.

Rubbish swirled in the breeze.
The empty platform regarded me disbelievingly.
"No," I told it. "I'm right. It's all true."
It'll only be the Runaway Train for me.
For me and a few others.
All runaways like myself of course.
No ticket.
All you needed was time.
And no sense of direction.
Anyone with a destination in mind would be thrown off at the
nearest stop.

Sleep caught me. But only for seconds.
I woke up just in time.
The Runaway Train stood on the track like a savior.
It gleamed so finely in the moonlight that I turned to share my
elation with the next passenger.
But I smiled at air.
No one but me.
Well.
That was okay.
My dream could be just that-mine-for a while longer.

As I boarded the Runaway Train, daylight spread.
A horizon all full of pinks and blues and possibilities.
As I sat down, the white doors shut.
"Next stop," The driver said. "The beginning of the road."

And, as we pulled away, I pressed my face against the frosted window just so I could see the platform and the station and the world disappearing fast behind.

