

# POEMS

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## **Nobody's Perfect**

A turbaned Swami, a bearded Amish  
and a shaven-headed US army recruit  
mingle with Soccer Moms and LL Bean  
button-downs in some Cincinnational  
airport lounge or hotel lobby or some  
such;

if Wallace stay-at-home Stevens  
dreamt a France that was what water  
is to the glockenspiel's plash, then  
how am I to play my America now  
Crispin's percussion *Kyoto*, *Iraq*,  
*Alaska*, *Katrina* comes out wrong?

Chiaroscuro?

Put everything in context  
something shines, but paintings darken  
over time and kings and shepherds end  
up crouched around a brownish light,  
while spectators, from squinting, go blind.

## **A European History of Trains**

Trains brought holidays, then later murder;  
variations on the theme of order.

## **IA 52240**

OK, at chucking out time  
or after the parties, ie.  
for a couple of hours round two  
there will be call for them,  
but why now at six o'clock  
are there five yellow taxis  
lined beside the blue and white and red  
on silver of a Greyhound bus  
called Chicago? The lack  
of anything else to do?  
The off-chance, a coffee, a ride one  
day in ten; wait for San Francisco then  
New York. Like most of life no reason.  
But I am walking back from where no hope is,  
where there is nothing, no, least of all, names;  
so for this scene, a surety  
of colors, some thanks.



**Positioning**

Greater

Middle

East

\* Campaign slogan of Nicolas Sarkozy  
in the French presidential election.

**Le travail c'est la liberté\***

Work is not freedom; maybe money is  
(at any rate the lack of it enslaves  
and work, like luck, is a way to get it)  
but work, negotium, arbeit? Since when?



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