

Subject to slight delays

He's been loyal to this spot
since before High Barnet
turned dot matrix tangerine,
before the ban on smoking,
before the whiteboard quoting
Bert Bacharach and Plath,
before the blue Oyster card
with crash barriers protecting
its passengers from floods
of desperation and love,
before his appendix burst
and the 21st century erupted
in money pus all over us.
He's been loyal to the brass
that edges the steps polished
by thousands of soles daily.
Loyal to the tunnel's breath
upon his shaven cheek
rich in carbon particulates,
loyal to the eyes of mice
and the hair like tumbleweed
blowing between the tracks.
Loyal to the crowded air,
to the shrieking doors and
the singe of failing brakes
shunted to faraway sidings.
Loyal to the slick posters
telling him to slim, to save,
to drink, to drive, to fear,
to sing, to cook, to love,
to get Beach Body Ready.
Loyal to the billions ranked
from Balham to Nagasaki,
to the ants of the Amazon
and the elks of the plains.
Loyal to the minding of gaps.