

TRACKS

poem by Matthew Murrey

after Tomas Tranströmer

It is the last night—
stars, moonlight, thin clouds—
and I am sad nothing
remains but the baggage car

where I packed myself
still crying and holding on
to my mother's soft skirt
the second day of school,

where I stowed my sister and I
watching a black and white
movie on TV until our father
says "Turn that off."

My first time seeing you
is in there, along with a pair
of shoes, a funeral, a bed
on the floor, and two horizons.

What a noon it was when
the whole train was on its way
across rivers and fields heading
toward mountains and the sea.

I was looking forward to far
more, but this will have to do:
bright moonlight, leafless trees,
stars forever out of reach.



Image: "Night Train" by Gerrie Paino. "Tracks" was written by Matthew Murrey for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, April 2024, and selected as the Artist's Choice.