

...july 8, 2009...

it was july the eighth
and i was heading out to surrey
sky-train wise and hurrying
to meet my father at king george –

while i waiting at burrard
the eastbound track was slow
as sitting on a wall-side bench
an old man mumbled to himself –
wrinkled shirt of sometime blue
jeans and hair the skull shone through –
he smiled when i wandered in –
a caved-in toothless giant grin
as if he wondered where i'd been –

he stumbled to a half bent height
and asked where i was going to –
i said “king george” – he said “me too”
and then described how hard it was –
that his whole day traveling
had circled him around again –
he said “king george is far away
and maybe just impossible” –

i checked my watch – he asked the time –
i said that it was almost ten
when the loudspeakers above
announced “king george – the expo line”
–

the train pulled up and i got on
and felt him shadowing my steps –

i found a half-seat near the back
and then took out a book to read –
he sat behind me – then he said
“will this train take me to king george?
i think i'm going to follow you –
i think that you know where you're going
so maybe i can get there too” –
his eyes were paler than the sky –
his smile walked with innocence
and the gravel in voice
betrayed a world of cigarettes –
he sat behind and chattered on
to no one in particular –

granville – stadium – main and on –
at burrard he became upset –
stood up – sat down and said again
“this train is wrong – it isn't going
to king george - it isn't right –
maybe i should get just get out
and ask that person for advice” –
he looked at me and back again
at someone standing just outside –
then sat and stood and sat again
and looked at me and then away –

so i said “yes – this train can sometimes
feel wierd with all its stops –
and there's another line as well
the one they call millennium –
it's very easy to mix up
and sometimes feels like circling –
but i am going to king george
and that is where this train is going” –
he sat himself down nervously
as the train moved on again –

stop by start and start by stop
gradually he grinned again –
“new westminster – now it's right
you're right about that circling –
sometimes it seems i just got on
and then i'm going back again –
but now it's right – i know it now
and after this there's three more stops –
gateway – scott – and then king george
and that's just where i want to be” –

then it seemed like he forgot
that i was in the seat ahead
until i heard the intercom
proclaim the surrey central stop –
he jumped up fast and then looked back
as if he'd made some great mistake –
“this is the one – i think it is –
i must get off...” he looked at me
and then he asked “is this the one
where all the buses come and go?”
when i nodded he dashed off
and i sat back – strangely alone
until arriving at king george.