

ALIENATED LABOR

There's a woman in the
Penn Station Ladies Room
who spends her life closing
doors: faded yellow uniform
faded yellow hair
lips tight
she lunges to slam the door
one woman holds open for another.

There's a man in the
Greek Diner Parking Lot
who spends his life stopping
cars: gesticulating wildly
he challenges each driver
curses spitting through his teeth
finger poking an obscene dumb show
of threats and violence.

GOOD FOUNDATION

A big old woman in a black raincoat
sits on the Staten Island Ferry
at the end of a long work day.
She does not look at the tireless torchbearer
she passes.

Sunk into the corner of the bench
her whole body leans on the gray metal wall—
a ramshackle wooden house settling
into earth:
shingles shake loose from rusty nails
paint chips flake to the ground
the attic roof collapses into the second floor.

Only the foundation holds.