

## *A Walk*

I took a walk on the railroad track.  
Followed that for a while  
and got off at the country graveyard  
where a man sleeps between  
two wives. Emily van der Zee,  
Loving Wife and Mother,  
is at John van der Zee's right.  
Mary, the second Mrs van der Zee,  
also a Loving Wife, to his left.  
First Emily went, then Mary.  
After a few years, the old fellow himself.

Eleven children came from these unions.  
And they, too, would all have to be dead now.  
This is a quiet place. As good a place as any  
to break my walk, sit, and provide against  
my own death, which comes on.  
But I don't understand, and I don't understand.  
All I know about this fine, sweaty life,  
my own or anyone else's,  
is that in a little while I'll rise up  
and leave this astonishing place  
that gives shelter to dead people. This graveyard.  
And go. Walking first on one rail  
and then the other.

## NIGHT JOURNEY

Now as the train bears west,  
Its rhythm rocks the earth,  
And from my Pullman berth  
I stare into the night  
While others take their rest.  
Bridges of iron lace,  
A suddenness of trees,  
A lap of mountain mist  
All cross my line of sight,  
Then a bleak wasted place,  
And a lake below my knees.  
Full on my neck I feel  
The straining at a curve;  
My muscles move with steel,  
I wake in every nerve.  
I watch a beacon swing  
From dark to blazing bright;  
We thunder through ravines  
And gullies washed with light.  
Beyond the mountain pass  
Mist deepens on the pane;  
We rush into a rain  
That rattles double glass.  
Wheels shake the roadbed stone,  
The pistons jerk and shove,  
I stay up half the night  
To see the land I love.