

End Scene
by Daniel B. Johnson

What plays on a train car window
but sunspots and silhouettes,

pigeons, statuary, ads, and clouds?
The lives of the dead, I've heard,

flickered at night in empty cars,
a cut-rate penny arcade.

When the el train sparks into a turn
a man in a porkpie hat appears

again, on the porch with his wife,
swizzling something-on-the-rocks.

She knits. Neither talks.
He raises a pipe to his lips,

the scene cuts off. Diner lights
glare on the railcar glass.

Night into night, the dead parade
as if playing to a packed house—

twin sisters double dutch,
a hunter raises a quail. Yesterday's

newspaper blows around.
Train doors open and close—

a suicide in a swimsuit
waves from an inner-tube raft.