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New Woman

Lisa Stillman
Denison University

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New Woman

She moves quickly
through the subway,
a dark woolen scarf
tucked around her thin neck,
black bag snug under her elbow.

Beneath eyebrows
tidy from arch to taper,
shadows blend, as muted
silver as the steel
step underfoot.

Her foot clad
in heeled suede
clops the stair
like a wood mallet
to a low chime.

Cuffed pant legs
swish ankle to ankle,
sleeves rustle
like the brittle leaves
brushing the gutter.

Her blank dark eye
reflects the stark
drear of the city
as she emerges
into the crowd.

The many faces
around her are only
odd shapes of vacancy
in the dismal blur.
She sees none of them.

Staring ahead,
blind in the rush,
only her own rhythm
is familiar to her:
rustle, clop, swish.

-Lisa Stillman '95