

Pippa Little

The Thin Places

are seen from trains
from a high vantage point, as on a viaduct
glimpsed only for the moment it takes
to feel the catch in your throat, the loss.

There is faded writing on the brick, narrative
gone native, yet the smoky curves entice,
remind you of a woman's name – Nancy, perhaps.
And the walls thin, allow the lamplight through,

so for a heartbeat or an in-breath there you are,
safe from the rain in company of friends
and velvet cushions, loved, living that other life
you know you deserved – until the sleepwalk starts again

of carriage swerve, vibrating windows
through which office blocks, bricked-up chapels
turn their backs and you, whose life you live
from the inside, catch up your folded coat

to shake the light out of it
before the swoop into arrival.