

Totem

For Stefan

The burgundy candle is burning
On behalf of a yellow-bright flame
The midnight hour is tracking
Sounds off a coming train

In the wake of a broken promise
Words that went unsaid
Both ends of the candle are burning
From my toes up to my head

Then her children's tears ran red
Flooding the void with a sword and shield
I saw Pluto crossing the heavens
Pluto's shadow in the fiery field

And the poet speaks in a whisper
Her sound reached into my ear
The past is preparing the future
She is organizing my fears

So a fool can bravely step forward
To that ledge above the sea
His stardust spilt over the page
From somewhere under me

For love of this burgundy totem
The light from a rosy-red flame
Mystery train in the distance
I can hear it in my veins

Note: "Totem" is from a collection of gathered poems titled *The Railtown Poems*, completed in the 2000s.