

Upfield Line

you old dog you / you sardine huddled in the tin you /
you sardine tin jostling in a La Manna shopping basket
brimming with other assorted tins / all dressed beautiful
adorned citrus fragrant earthy spice staining the glossy oil
that seeps through a canvas tote like you won't believe /
you with your shuttering vistas warehouses car park artists
residencies luxury co-dwelling homing startups co-looming
over weathered weatherboard workers cottages / they
thems reading a Ferrante they started at Kines before
knock-offs at Flippys, those stupid European cups / pepper
trees heaving chain-link fences / gotta keep the trains in
their crates lest they grow restless and destructive / like a
shivering greyhound biochemically engineered to hunt and
slaughter teacup cavoodles with deathly precision / once
a wolf, behold Custard, gemini rising, trembling in socks
and a Labubu dangling from an anxiety vest, nipping at the

customers lingering outside A1 / Upfield Line service dead zones contracted by Merri-bek Labor hacks to intercept your screen time / Royal Park arranging a daily dose of unbouquetted flora has you squinting, like this could all be almost bearable if you don't mind the airborne golf-ball risk / *fuck golf, turf and terfs alike, amirite?* you think of flirting to your train girlfriend, think of her turning her face back to the window, indifferent unamused in her crochet bonnet / think of watching her vaping at 7.55am her mullet haloed by blue raspberry plume, the most beautiful thing you've never spoken to this side of Sydney Road / Upfield Line a stuttering fluorescent beam above the deli counter, radiating over heaving shelves of salted baccalà and limbs of sopressa as big as the geometric toddlers squealing and scattering the debris of an \$18 báhn mì / Upfield Line a shimmering door between two unyielding rooms / a comfy commute for the comfortable / a live-action working-class extraction machine / decompress your seasonal depression with a tour of the desaturated federation double-front industrial complex / returning from the Upfield Line your neighbour soliloquises how much these streets have changed since he bought his place for \$40k and drove a Cadillac in the Keating administration / above you the ringtails are scrambling to assemble new dreys after the council workers fold down the tree crane / you want to say that you too know what it is to lose a temporary world / instead you compliment the roses, commiserate on the frozen dawn ahead / go home to a home you can't afford and pack your lunch box for your lunch tote for the lunch hour of the workday already grinding the soles of your boots / another night another morning another train on the Upfield Line / you door you, you promise of a life you couldn't live if you wanted to /

One day the books will count the dead

but not the killers,
will pass over the
weapons,
the death mongers,
the megatons of
carbon and fire
and steel, will
sing sorry songs
for crimes they denied
were ever
certain, won't name
names but show you
faces in black
and white and
never colour,
never blood or
rage. The books
of the forgetful
future will mourn
lost stories,
burning libraries,

shattered schoolrooms,
olive trees
where once the slaughtered
nestled in the roots
to listen to the wind,
will take
pains to mourn every
child taken
while curled in beds
and arms
where once they
read stories written to
remember, to grow
the seeds that nourish
the scorched soil.
If we let them, the
books will grieve what
they'll say was inevitable,
unstoppable, unfathomable,
but they won't tell
the fury and the fight,
what those children
begged the world to
witness. If we let
them they'll ask how
we could have
let it happen.
If we let them
they will do it again,
and will ask us again,
however did we let them.