Not by sight

by Tania Runyan in the June 13, 2012 issue

The Jakartans offer themselves fully to the tracks,
a row of living crucifixes stretched across the rails.

They spread their arms along one side, sling their necks
back over the steel, and tilt their faces to the sky.

On the other track they prop their ankles, bare feet
pulsating to the low voltage of faraway trains.

They believe the charges emit sparks of insulin, release
the blue current of sleep, liquefy arthritic hands.

Though the signs warn of fines and arrest, they stay.
They stay though their children nap and urinate on the rails.

And when freight trains thunder by on parallel tracks,
wheels just feet from their trembling chests, they press

even further into the steaming metal, believing in a healing
no doctor has proven, no faithful like I have prayed for.