

ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL

On the nearly empty Bart train a competition
is being held between the body odor of the unwashed
and the astringent industrial disinfectants,

It's too close to call,

One judge is rolling a blunt
and another is muttering to himself

Buttons become risk

If you were meant to be lost for a while
then the guy who gave the maze a redesign deserves applause

In the day that has the nicest weather
in the weeks that became months where
You forget what day it is on the regular

Never mind the actor, this crisis deserves an Oscar,
It's made a believer out of an agnostic like me

I was losing it on Tuesday and
I thought today was Thursday, the days sound and feel alike

There's a sound that deserves a name

I don't know it

I know it's there and we can hear it,

Soon

Essential workers, meth heads and cyclists

are what I see on the train now,

On my way to meet with you,

To catch another train to San Francisco,

We biked to The Palace of Fine Arts

where we had a vegan lunch,

prelude to seeing the Andy Goldsworthy art installations

and classic views, It's true, I know who I am and

I'm better for knowing you, Toni, and

it's nice to know you're meeting me in the future that is quickly approaching,

It makes remembering

This easier:

Worst case scenario

Done been a thing lately

Loose gravel did

A number on you, Eric,

And I guess we're lucky

But I don't feel that way
I feel cheated,
You were,
Laid off,
I was furloughed,
Your collarbone broken in multiple places,
Hairline fracture,
At least you'll fully recover and
there will be no permanent damage,
We were nearly 20 miles in when
it happened and we had planned to share a beer
at Lake Temescal post bike ride,
Now you can't sustain yourself through cycling
for three months at least,
There's weight and we are
Governed by gravity
The establishment is stretched thin and the fabric is frayed,
Our relationships become more important,
more necessary, beautiful in their resilience, in their resistance,
In their persistence,
We find our futures strengthened
And everything seems more at rest,
enough to let your hair down and

drink morning water and sigh, happily,

“It’s been a while.”

Theo Konrad Auer, Oakland, California