

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM HUGHES



An Honest Buck In Troubled Times

Fiddler on the tracks
trying to earn a living,
playing the classics for nothing,
or a dime if you will.

A protégé gone bad,
or maybe a struggling student,
fiddling on the tracks.
An honest buck in troubled times.

The commuters at Park Street station
gather all around.
Reeled in by the fiddle's harmony,
they forget their worries for a while,
and open their hearts to the music.

In building his feverish pace
the fiddle becomes warm to the touch,
as if baked in the Fourth of July sun.
The heat radiates through the crowd
warming their senses to the beat.

His pace quickens as the approaching train's
hollow echo engulfs the narrow platform.
The wheels lock on the steel track
producing a deafening pitch.
The pale light of the Green Line's lead train
is barely visible through the black haze.

His audience will soon depart,
so he begins to build his final crescendo.
The notes cut through the tunnel's
dry air like a musketeer's lance
in a challenge of honor.
Defying the screeching brakes of the
approaching Symphony-bound train.
And rewarding in a trail of green.

As the train pulls out
his fingers ease off the neck.
A deep breath, a swig of joe,
then back to the music,
that pays his way home.