

THE GIANT NEVER SLEEPS

Once about two years ago now...

I could write poetry
And use simple words.
Now my lexicon is full of
Mitigated negative declaration and
Refining throughput margins and
Positive train control....

Once about two years ago...

I could dream and
I could laugh.
Now my dreams are full of
Lac-Mégantic, Quebec
And the rickety Feather River bridge
And the asthma of a generation to come
And the loss of more than Polar Bears.
The cute Richard Scarey scenes along our Benicia shoreline
(The classic cute combination of sailboats, airliners and choo-choo trains)
Are scarier now,
Spine chilling when the choo-choo's horn speaks of volatile crude.

Once about two years ago...

I thought of myself as happy.
I seem to have turned to a grouchy ol' man.
I spend my days fielding dreadful news
And technical studies
Of Human-on-human threats
To health and safety.

The Bomb Trains threaten our days and the days of those up the tracks.

Valero can see no harm:
The earth warms slowly if at all...
And everyone knows that the bombs explode ever so rarely,
like lightning bolts,
killing only one in a gazillion – what're the odds?!

Once about two years ago now...

Our town changed
And we learned to dread
The friendly giant who whistles for a bullet train,
And never sleeps,
Right next door.

*Roger Straw, The Benicia Independent, January, 2015
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