

The Cow near Matamoros

CAROL HAMILTON

Tied to her terror,
 her placid, brush-haired sides
so like a back room with a hide armchair
 just damping the world down,
she waited in seeming peace,
 breathed easy in and out as we painted
a house just across the river.

But wild-eyed trains
 reared and bucked their trails past
with metronome regularity,
 and each time she strained and leapt
against the chain,
 eyes bursting blind
to flee her fear.

We stood and stared our sympathy ---
 which did no good.
I think she learned no lessons
 from this patterned pain nor I.