

End of the Line

Peter Galassi

Roy Arden's *Terminal City* is a sequence of sixteen black-and-white photographs made in 1999. Considered as a pair, the second and third frames are a marvel of visceral intuition, for together they evoke, much more acutely than any single photograph could, our bodily passage over the tracks and up the little embankment.

The first frame sets the stage and shows the way. But it may not be until the third frame lops off the tops of the houses and compels our attention to the scruffy switchback of the path that we realize how steadily we've had our eyes on the ground.

The fourth frame slows our forward motion to begin pointing at things here and there along the way. Soon enough we sense that we are not simply looking at the improvised accommodations of the down and out — we may be one of them. Progressing one frame at a time, slowly zooming in on things, the sequence never loses the momentum that it gathered between the second and third frames. As *Terminal City* slouches toward its unlovely conclusion, Arden doesn't just show us the junk in the muck. He rubs our noses in it.