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Volume 21  
Issue 1 *Rust and Stardust* (2012-2013 Issue)

Article 19

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9-1-2012

## Platform 4

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### Recommended Citation

Borecki, Louisa (2012) "Platform 4," *The Promethean*: Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 19.  
Available at: <http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol21/iss1/19>

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## Platform 4

*Louisa Borecki*

I spit on the ground and switch my cigarette to my left hand so I can rewarm the right. I'm waiting for Deanna to return from the bathroom. There are a hundred people on this platform but you could spot her from Australia. A sea of lanky Italians in skinny jeans and knee boots part for her. Her tie-dye jammers taper at the ankle to reveal wool socks bunched up under Birkenstocks. She's wearing three sweaters, each baggier and chunkier than the last. Even if you couldn't see her head you would know it's adorned with dreadlocks and a hemp headband. Some things you know without having to see them.

"Do not go into that bathroom. Someone has recently had explosive diarrhea in that bathroom." Deanna and I should be used to the public bathroom situation by now, but they become ever more horrifying with each train station.

"Platform 5."

"What?" I realize my cigarette has burnt down to my fingers. I stamp it out and turn to Deanna.

"We're on the wrong platform." Deanna looks at the train tickets. I turn to her in horror, knowing the consequences of missing this train.

"GO GO GO," I shriek. "THIS IS NOT A DIRLL. I REPEAT, THIS IS NOT A DRILL."

We plow through those skinny Italian bitches and thunder down the stairs and then up again to Platform 5. By the time we find an empty chunk of cement to sit down on my sides hurt. I can still see platform 4 across the tracks. We watch as a train labeled CINQUE TERRE pulls up to it.

Before I can pick up my bag, the train sighs and soldiers on. It is our train leaving from platform 4. We had been on the right platform to begin with. I glare at Deanna with such disdain you would have thought she just ate my first-born.

"Huh . . . I guess it was platform 4 after all." Deanna seems

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unperturbed.

My life flashes before my eyes. We'd have to sleep on the tracks. Deanna would be kidnapped and raped by Mafia and I would never forgive myself. I'd be tormented by her memory and lose myself in heroin. Police would find my over-dosed carcass in an alley being picked over by rabid cats.

"Next train comes in an hour." Deanna cracks her back mid-sentence.

I shake the images of my impending demise from my mind and slump down to wait. When the train finally arrives Deanna and I push onto it with such fervor you would have thought it was the last train out of Nazi Germany.

We spend most of the ride in silence. Anticipation and silence. The last five minutes of the ride plunge into an endless darkness as the train tunnels through the mountain. This hole doesn't seem to have an end. Finally, one glimpse of light – then a second. The train comes to a slow stop at a station on the brink of the sea, out of the rabbit hole.

We arrive to catch the last streaks of a pink sun on a green sea. My breath is taken away. Not in a fainting-southern-bell sort of a way, but the kind to remind you that there's more beauty in the world than hate. The only way out of the rabbit hole is through it.