

Taking the Late Train

By Chelsea McGlynn – Walkersville, Maryland

Tired men with handmade signs block the trains from leaving
Aguas Calientes. Stuck, we scramble through the ruins
of Machu Picchu again, take the waters at the hot springs again,

sip our café con leches and ask our waitress *¿Quien?*
and *¿Por que?* She answers us: *Agua*. All our water is worth
fighting for. Before the train tracks were laid, your own

two legs were the only way to travel here, and still today,
there are no roads to Aguas Calientes. We could walk back
to Cusco on the Inca trail— those steps cut out of sheer cliffs,

only as wide as a llama's haunches— and touch the same stones
that the last Incan emperor walked before Pizarro sentenced him
to death. The Catholic priest that took his final confession asked

Emperor Atahualpa if he was baptized, which translated to
“bathed in the sacred waters”. *Yes, yes*, he said, *all our water is sacred*.
So they strangled him, instead of burning, in respect of his final,

Catholic wishes. We do not walk home on the Inca trail,
merely wait at the bar for the police with submachine guns to clear
the train tracks and tell the bartenders making our Pisco Sours

Please, hold the ice.