Passing the Night

George Keithley
PASSING THE NIGHT

The second world war is also remembered for the families of the sailors passing the night in the Northwestern Station, holding hands and chattering like children home from school and hardly aware of the seamen’s bags left on the floor in the lobby.

Their voices stop whenever someone hears the hiss of an engine or the initial slip of the enormous wheels.

Winter forces the parents to plunge their hands deep in their pockets as they leave the passenger gates and grow interested in the terminal—the coffee counter or commuter bar and the all-night news stands. Hundreds wander under the wall clock and browse beside the empty benches wasting time and not wanting to watch the brown cars slide away, leaving the long shed and slowly crawling over the country in the snow.