



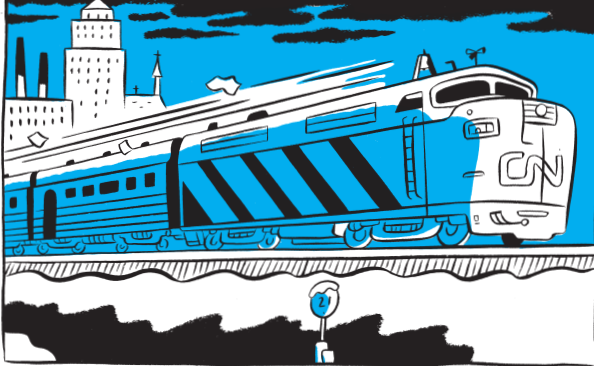




Rain was drizzling, so Santa was waving from under a sheet of cellophane. There weren't more than 20 people watching... but y'know, I think I liked that parade more than any other I'd seen.



The other memory revolves around a moment that occurred when I was twelve. A non-event really--just me, in the living room, lying on the couch, reading. The TV is on and I can hear my mother in the kitchen. Nothing is bothering me.



I retreat to these memories often when I'm depressed.



This all leads me to an earlier memory--a key one that I think explains a lot. I couldn't have been more than five at the time.



It seems I used to like to get inside cardboard boxes and close them up behind me. I enjoyed being in that safe, confined space.



My mother's place is a lot like those boxes.

